

# PHUCK AND PHUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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The men of No. 6 turned the corner on a run, with Lou, trumpet to his mouth, in front. They saw that the fire was in one of a row of tall houses further down the street.

# PLUCK AND LUCK

Stories of Adventure

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## NUMBER 6

— OR —

### THE YOUNG FIREMEN OF CARBONDALE

By EX-FIRE CHIEF WARDEN

#### CHAPTER I.

##### A CRY FOR HELP.

"Help!"

Lou Lane ceased whistling as this cry saluted his ears, straightened himself, and listened to hear if it would be repeated. It was the time of dusk, and in a somewhat lonely part of the outskirts of Carbondale.

"Help!"

A female's cry! He was off like an arrow sped from the bow in the direction whence it came, and he suddenly came upon a scene that made his blood tingle.

It was that of a young girl struggling wildly to release herself from the grasp of a young man who was endeavoring to kiss her against her will.

"Unhand the lady, you cowardly cur!" cried Lou, springing forward and raising his clenched fist to enforce the command if not complied with instantly.

The young ruffian growled out an angry imprecation, but still persecuted the girl, when Lou gave him a gentle reminder of his presence by a clip under the ear. At the same time Lou got a glimpse of the ruffian and saw that suspended by his side was a game-bag that looked familiar.

He had just noted this, when the ruffian let go of the girl and turned savagely toward Lou, who instantly cried:

"Phil Dobbins!"

"Lou Lane!" exclaimed the other.

"For shame, Phil, to assault a poor girl."

"What's it your business?" he growled in reply.

"So much my business that you'll never do it while I'm around."

"Won't, hey?" sneered the other, and made a movement toward the girl again, and would have at once seized hold of her had not Lou sprang forward and knocked down his outstretched arm, saying:

"For heaven's sake, Phil, be sensible! What do you mean?"

"Mean!" repeated Phil in a hoarse, thick voice that made Lou more than suspect that he had been drinking. "Why, I mean to kiss that gal, and I'm a-going to if I die for it," and he lunged at her again, and would have accomplished his purpose had not Lou's muscular arm shot forth and propelled a tightly-clenched fist between his eyes.

The blow carried Phil Dobbins off his feet, and he lay flat on the grass-grown road for a minute or so before he attempted to rise. As he got upon his feet he reached for and picked up the gun with which he had been hunting, and with a howl of mingled rage and drunken fury pointed it at Lou's head.

"Fool!" cried Lou, "do you know what you are about? Drop your gun. Do you hear?"

"Interfere with me, will you?" hissed Phil. "I'll fix you!" and his finger was about to press the trigger, when Lou sprang forward and knocked the weapon from his grasp.

"Now be off with you!" cried Lou, sternly, "and take your gun, but don't point it at me again."

Grumbling beneath his breath, Phil picked up his gun and hurried away in the gathering darkness. When he had disappeared, Lou turned to the girl, who still stood trembling with fright, and as he looked at her his eyes lighted up, for he saw that she was young and beautiful.

"How did this happen?" he asked.

"I was on my way home, and was just passing here when he came across the field from the woods yonder, climbed the fence, with his gun on his shoulder, which he threw into the wood when he saw me, saying he wanted a kiss, and I screamed."

"And I heard it," said Lou, "I am happy to say, although I am sorry the occasion occurred. Has he ever troubled you before?"

"No, but he has seen me once or twice, and—and—I didn't like the looks he gave me."

"What is your name?"

"Gertie Kingston."

"A pretty name," he said. "Where do you live, if I may ask?"

"In the Riverside Row, they call it," said the girl, coloring slightly. "It is tenanted by factory people, sir; I, too, work in the factory."

"What a —— shame," he was going to say, but halted ere the words were uttered. "I'll walk a way with you, as it is in my direction."

"Thank you," she said, and while they walked Lou told her his name.

"I heard him call you by it," she said. "I've heard of you; your father is Mr. Lane, of Lane & Dobbins."

"Yes, and Phil's father is Mr. Dobbins, of Lane & Dobbins," said Lou.

"I'm so sorry," said the girl, quickly.

"About what?"

"That I should have brought you two into collision."

"That's nothing," said Lou. "There has been secret ill-feeling between us for a long time past. It had to come out some time, and might just as well come out now."

"Why, does he dislike you?"

"Cordially," said Lou, and, dropping into an easy confidence, he went on to say: "Phil is awful touchy and immensely proud. We are about one age, and went to school together, and—and—" with an affectation of modesty, "somehow I always stood higher than Phil in the class, and that galled him. A week ago there was a jumping match in which I took part. Now, Phil prides himself on his jumping, and he really is a good jumper, but—here we are; this is your home, I believe, so good-night."

"Thank you for your kindness. Good-night," and Gertie raised the latch of the gate, crossed the little patch of yard and disappeared in the house.

Lou turned his footsteps homeward and was about half-way there when he stumbled across something stretched across the path. Stooping, he discovered that the something was Phil

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Dobbins, sunk in a drunken stupor, his gun by his side, one hand curled up on his breast, the other clutching a flat bottle now empty, but whose odor plainly told what its contents had been.

"Phil—Phil!" cried Lou, shaking him. "Arouse yourself." "Lemme be," he growled in a stupefied way. "Go 'way."

"No, I won't," said Lou. "See here, Phil, suppose your father should hear of this?"

"Don't care a cont'nal," he drowsily replied.

"But you do, though," said Lou, whose forgiving nature led him to try and avert the storm that would burst over Phil's head should his present condition ever reach Mr. Dobbins' ears; but do his best, he could not arouse Phil sufficiently to make him endeavor to rise, and he would probably have been compelled to give up altogether but for the opportune arrival of another person.

It proved to be a young fellow—an intimate friend of Lou's, Billy Gray by name.

Between them they managed to get Phil on his feet, and then, using the most deserted streets, they led him along and finally stopped in front of a building whose wide doors and a huge "No. 6" above proclaimed it as an engine-house, and such it was, and of "H. and L. No. 6" the trio were members. They opened the door, led Phil upstairs and laid him down on a bench to sleep off the effects of his potations.

"Say nothing of this, Billy," suggested Lou.

"All right," was the reply as they descended the stairs and left the engine-house.

About ten o'clock Lou returned, to find that Phil must have come to himself and left, for the place was empty; and then Lou turned his footsteps homeward and mused as he went over his relations with Phil, and wondered what would be the upshot of their encounter that day.

"I'm sorry for Phil," he muttered. "He used to be good-hearted and generous, but since he commenced drinking he has changed greatly. I wish Mr. Dobbins knew of it," said Lou, uneasily. "I've known it some time now, but I've not breathed a word to a living soul."

By this time he had arrived at the gate of his house and, crossing the spacious lawn, he ran lightly up the steps and entered the parlor with:

"I suppose you think I'm late, but I couldn't avoid it very well."

"Not late, if you were in good company," said Mr. Lane. "Well, Lou, I've been waiting for you to have a talk with you."

"A talk with me?"

"Yes, sit down. Now, Lou, I am suddenly called from home. It is necessary that I should go to the west coast of Africa, and I thought of proposing your going into the store during my absence. What do you say?"

"Say?" ejaculated Lou. "Nothing in the world could suit me better."

"I am glad to hear it."

"When do you go?"

"Next Thursday. To-day is Friday. You will be ready for business Monday morning."

And then Lou went off to bed to dream of the new condition of affairs that was to grant him the one well-defined wish of his heart—a position in his father's business.

Monday came and found him at his post, and being instructed by his father, he soon gained a good insight into the general affairs of the house.

Thursday came and, accompanied with all the good wishes Lou had strength to muster, Mr. Lane gradually faded from sight as the receding vessel started on her long journey.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ELECTION.

A few weeks after the departure of Mr. Lane Mr. Dobbins appeared at the store at what for him was an early hour, and Phil bore him company; the latter personage was established behind a desk as receiving clerk, a position which in the house of Lane & Dobbins was a very important one.

Lou waited a little while, and then going up to Phil, remarked, extending his hand as he spoke:

"Well, Phil, it seems we are to be fellow clerks; in that case, let's shake hands, and let-by-gones be by-gones."

Phil accepted the proffered hand in a cold, indifferent way, and said he hoped they wouldn't quarrel, mentally adding that he thought it more than likely they would.

Lou understood exactly how the case stood, and so did Phil, and each avoided the other as much as possible; and

beyond being barely civil never spoke a single word outside of business matters, until one day, Mr. Dobbins having departed for the day, Lou saw Phil draw a small flat bottle from his desk and apply it to his lips.

One day he was called from his work by the announcement that some one to see him; it was Billy Gray.

His visitor soon explained his mission; in a little less than a week there was to be an election of officers for "H. and L. No. 6."

"And we're going to run you for foreman," said Billy. "Now don't say anything against it, for we've canvassed the thing thoroughly, and won't take 'no' for an answer."

"Very well, then," said Lou, with a light laugh.

The election night arrived, and Lou was on hand in the business room above the engine-room. The members were out in full force, and he found them gathered in little knots talking earnestly, or running around electioneering, and trying to influence the undecided ones to give their votes to this or that one.

At his entrance he was observed by Billy Gray, who instantly cried:

"Three cheers for our next foreman, Lou Lane!" and Lou's friends gave them with a will, while Phil Dobbins' brow grew black as a thunder-cloud. Lou saw it and instantly jumped to the conclusion that Phil was also a candidate.

His surmise proved correct, for when the meeting was called to order and business was begun, a fellow jumped to his feet, and with an oratorical flourish placed in nomination the name of Phil Dobbins.

The voting began, and Phil Dobbins, who now set a double value on the election, as his old enemy was pitted against him, watched each vote as it was dropped in the box, and strove to keep count of them so as to fore-judge the result.

He himself declined to vote, as also did Lou, and then the tellers began the count, and as they now and then cast a glance toward Lou, which might mean something or nothing, a buzz would run around the room:

"Lou's ahead—Lou's ahead!"

And each time this occurred Phil's brow would darken anew, and his teeth would sink in his under lip in vexation, and he fidgeted uneasily in his seat, a look of deep anxiety shrouding his face as the tellers approached the completion of their task.

"We have finished the count," said the tellers.

"How does it stand?"

Phil tried to appear unconcerned, but it was a miserable failure, and with face pale with anxiety he bent forward to hear the results.

"Lane—fifteen!"

"Fifteen!" and a smile of hope illumined Phil's face; excluding Lou and himself there were thirty-four votes; had he got the other nineteen?

His face flushed now, and he clenched his hands.

"Dobbins—fifteen. Two scattering and two blank. It's a tie between Lane and Dobbins."

Phil breathed easier. There was a good show yet, he thought.

"We shall have to vote again," said the chairman. "Prepare the ballots."

Then the gavel called them to order, and once more the voting began. Again Lou declined to vote; only Phil summoned the teller and dropped in a vote—for himself.

Then he sat turning pale and flushed by turns as the new ballots were counted, his brows knitting as he heard Lou's name pronounced the successful one, and brightening when he heard his own mentioned.

It was finished at last.

"Dobbins—seventeen."

"Less than one-half," thought Phil, for, counting his own vote, thirty-five had been cast; "but he can't possibly have all the rest."

"Lane—"

The teller paused, as if enjoying the surprise he knew his hearers felt, then slowly added:

"Eighteen."

An instant's silence, and then a rousing cheer went up for Lou, which was still echoing through the room, when Phil, beside himself with rage at having been defeated after voting for himself, sprang to his feet, shouting:

"I don't believe it—it's false!"

Quick as a flash the teller turned on him.

"Do you mean, sir, that I'm a liar?"

"Yes."

Spat-spat! right and left; and the two were engaged in a rough-and-tumble fight.

Lou was on his feet in a second, and, dashing at the combatants, pulled Phil off just as he had got the teller helplessly under him, and was about to cowardly use his unfair advantage.

To show their approbation of Lou's conduct, it was proposed to make his election unanimous; there were several dissenters, among them the would-be bribe-taker, all of whom quickly withdrew; then the election was made unanimous.

A good choice was made when Billy Gray was declared assistant foreman.

The election was over nicely when one of the sore-heads appeared and handed the chairman a note. It was the resignation of Phil Dobbins and his satellites.

"Accepted with thanks," was the verdict of the company, at hearing which slur the messenger winced, and Phil Dobbins, when he heard it, stamped fiercely on the ground and gritted his teeth.

With a hard, cold, cruel look about his mouth he said:

"Boys, can I depend on you to stick to me?"

"You can."

"Then we'll get up a company of our own, and if we don't get square with No. 6, call me a fool."

"Hurrah! That's the talk!"

"Meet me here to-morrow night!"

"All right."

And then they dispersed, and Phil, fuming, fretting, chafing, made his way homeward and lay more than half the night nursing his wrath, vowing vengeance and forming plans whereby to obtain it; and then he fell asleep, but the same train of thoughts ran through his dreams, and he awoke in the morning unrefreshed and uncomfortable in mind and body.

Lou and Phil met as usual in the store, but no word passed between them, and each pretended entire ignorance of even the existence of the other; and thus it continued for weeks, Lou learning outside, however, that by some hocus-pocus or other Phil had got into a fire company, and was its foreman, and heard, moreover, that he had darkly hinted that he would make it hot for No. 6 if his boys ever met her.

About this time Lou received by mail a letter, the contents of which puzzled him very much:

"MR. LANE: I write to warn you of the character of your father's partner, Mr. Dobbins. He would hesitate at nothing, and I have good reason for thinking he is already working an underhand game in your father's absence. Watch him closely, and if possible recall your father. A FRIEND."

He puzzled over this a long while, but all he could make out of it were the words recorded above; who had written it, where it had come from, he could obtain no clue, and he was on the point of writing to his father, urging his return, when the happy news arrived that he had started.

A month or more passed, and he was expecting him day by day, when he was struck dumb by an awful rumor.

### CHAPTER III.

ZACHARY KEMP.

The blood-chilling rumor was that the Eagle—the vessel his father sailed in—had foundered and gone down in a terrible storm.

In agony of mind he waited for the confirmation of the horrible news. It came speedily enough, poor fellow, and crushed and saddened, he staggered homeward to break the news to his mother.

Mr. Dobbins called in the evening, and, despite the terrible weight of grief that bowed him down, Lou did not fail to observe a certain air of guilty triumph resting on Dobbins, even when his voice was sunk in tones of condolence; and to Lou's mind there was a wicked sparkle in his eyes that he had seen shadowed there once or twice before.

When he was about to leave he said:

"Lou, my boy, as soon as you are in the humor I should like you to come and have a talk with me concerning your father's affairs. I suppose you don't know how he left them?"

"No, sir."

Lou went to see Mr. Dobbins the next day, and asked him what he wished to tell him, and Mr. Dobbins replied:

"Your father was the nominal head of the firm, yet his interest in the business amounted to but a few hundred dollars,

and that is all swallowed up by the expenses of his trip, which was a personal matter; and the house you live in—"

"What of it?" gasped Lou, as Mr. Dobbins hesitated.

"Is mortgaged to me for more than it is worth."

Stunned by the intelligence, Lou was silent for some minutes before he could collect his thoughts; then he said:

"I suppose I may see the papers?"

"Of course"; and Mr. Dobbins went to the safe and produced various instruments with legal-looking seals of red, to which his father's well-known signature was attached.

"The cottage—" began Lou.

"Still belongs to you," said Mr. Dobbins. "That was your mother's private property, which your father could not touch. And now, my boy, I'm really and heartily sorry"—Lou glanced at him, for the hollow words seemed to come anywhere rather than from his heart—"that your affairs are left in such a bad condition. Still, with a little care you can get along. You can retain your position here, and by living in the cottage and keeping expenses down you can get along nicely."

Lou left the store like one in a dream, and made his way home. Mrs. Lane was surprised to hear the state of affairs.

"Do you think Dobbins could be dishonest?" queried Lou.

"No."

A few days later they removed to the cottage, and then Lou returned to business. He soon found that Phil had been promoted to the office, and that consequently he would be under him, and in his mind he at once knew that he could not long hold his position.

In fact, it was only for two days.

Phil, exultant at his power to harass his old enemy, lost no opportunity of doing so. At last Lou rebelled at Phil's insolent orders, at which he was informed by Mr. Dobbins, whose kind manner had now all departed, and whose face seemed lighted with as much malicious pleasure as Phil's, that he must either obey or—go.

"Then," said Lou, proudly, "I will go."

It was early afternoon when he entered their cottage home, and a single glance at his clouded face informed his mother that something was wrong; and to her inquiry he unfolded the circumstances of his leaving.

"What can we do?" and the tears sprang to his mother's eyes.

"Courage, mother," he said, softly; "we will never starve while I have a pair of hands to earn our bread. I will apply for a position in the factory."

"In the factory!" sobbed Mrs. Lane; "must you sink to that?"

"Mother," and Lou's voice rang with honest pride, "will you think less of me because I work in a factory?"

"No."

"Then say no more, but cheer up. Ha! somebody is coming—come in," as there came a knock at the door; in response it was opened, and a little, weazened, dried-up old man entered.

"How are you, Mr. Kemp?" said Lou.

"Only middlin'," squeaked the old man. "I hear you're in trouble, and I came to know if it was so."

"It is."

"I'm sorry," he said, in the same high key; "your father was a good man—a good man; and but for him I should be starved to death before now. He helped me after the fire, when the insurance company wouldn't pay me; I've saved a few dollars since then—would they do you any good?"

"No, thank you," replied Lou.

"What about the business?"

"It belongs to Mr. Dobbins."

"Bad rascal!" or so Lou thought he heard the old man mutter. "Goin' to work there?"

"I'm going to try and get a place in your nephew's factory."

"Very good; I'll see him," and old Zachary Kemp's sour visage disappeared.

The next day Lou applied at the factory office, and was given a position, with just enough pay to it to keep the wolf from the door.

One day soon after Carbondale was thrown into a state of great excitement. The operatives at the factory had struck for wages, and all had ceased working but Lou and a dozen or so others, who were threatened with violence if they did not follow the example of the others; and, sure enough, one night he was set upon and most cruelly beaten by half a dozen masked men.

But the next morning found him at his work, and the protruding butt of a revolver showed that he meant business.

The strikers grew more and more inflamed, and mischief was plainly afoot, and its nature was explained when one night the church bell pealed out a wild alarm. Springing from his bed, he hurried on his clothes and dashed to the engine-house; seizing his trumpet, he cried:

"Now, boys, man the ropes!"

A wild cheer, the ropes were run out, two dozen pairs of willing hands grasped it, and away they dashed; away—away; the fire growing nearer, the flames mounting higher; away, rushing along the heavy roads toward the fire, which Lou knew without telling was the factory.

A rattle and a crash, and wild shouts; Lou's trumpet was at his lips in an instant.

"Boys, it's No. 3, and Dobbins. Now, double-quick; don't let them beat us to the fire!"

Rattle—rattle, surge, shouts, cries; No. 3 came in sight through a by-street, Dobbins in the lead.

"On!" and Lou flourished his trumpet high in air.

A wild hurrah, they dashed through not five feet in front of No. 3, and compelled her to come to a halt.

Then a shock almost carried them from their feet as the heavy truck struck some obstruction and came to a halt; a No. 3 man had flung a block of wood beneath the wheels.

"Now!" shrieked Dobbins, "get past them! Keep them stuck!"

Billy Gray was at the wheel in an instant, and had bent to remove the block, when he was seized by the shoulders and dragged away. Back he went, and, rushing upon the guard who interposed, knocked him off his pins. By this time No. 3 and No. 6 were side by side, and each foreman was yelling like a living fury, and both H. and L. and steamers were dragged along at a pace they never knew before.

Lou rushed on, and Billy Gray, in charge of the tongue, kept him in sight. They had to turn the next corner, and a bright thought entered the assistant's noodle, and he whispered a few words to those near him. It was an electric shock and No. 6 forged a dozen feet ahead and kept that distance.

No. 3 had the inside of the corner, and toward it Billy continually crowded them, and he chuckled triumphantly when, with a sudden crash, No. 3 brought up against a hitching-post that stood exactly on the corner.

"On!" came the trumpet command, and No. 6 dashed on alone.

"Halt!"

They were before the factory, from an upper window of which the red flames were darting.

"Billy, attend to the truck," cried Lou; "smash the doors!"

A ladder was brought and placed upright, and a young fellow had commenced mounting it, when there was a wild surge and swell and shout from the crowd of striking factory-men, and the ladder and its occupant were thrown to the ground.

"Up with it again!"

Once more it was reared, and once more an angry crowd threatened to throw it down; a beetle-browed fellow sprang forward and laid his hand on the ladder; the trumpet flashed as it circled through the air, and then there came a crash, the man fell with a groan, and Lou flung the battered and smashed trumpet to the ground.

A bound and he was on the ladder, and clinging to a round with his left hand, he faced the maddened crowd, and, whipping out his revolver that was lately his constant companion, took deadly aim and shouted:

"The first man who interferes with me in the performance of my duty gets a bullet. Enough said," and, springing to the ground, he shouted: "The axes, boys—the pails! All right there, Billy?"

"Aye—aye!"

"Then take charge of the men. Up the ladder, smash a window—it's the quickest way!"

A wild shout, a wilder hurrah, and Billy and half a dozen companions were on the ladder hurrying upward with hooks and pails of water.

Rattle, yell, bang, and No. 3 was on hand, and men rushed hither and thither wild with nervousness and excitement.

But no man that viewed the scene was more excited than a little, weazen, wrinkled-faced old fellow who rushed here and there. It was Zachary Kemp.

"Is it insured?" he eagerly asked of those who could, he thought, give him information. "Is it insured?"

And then his eyes lighted on the pale, anxious face of the president of the Carbonate Insurance Company.

"It is insured!" he cried, "in the Carbondale Company. Then let her burn—let her burn!"

He dashed up to the anxious-faced president, and danced up and down, his face transfigured with malicious joy, and cried:

"You wouldn't pay me—ha, ha! Let her burn!" and then darted away and worked around beside No. 3, fussed around her a minute, and then glided away, his wrinkled face lighted up by a sardonic grin, and muttering to himself:

"Ha, ha! Let her burn—let her burn!"

"All ready?" shrieked Phil Dobbins.

"Yes—yes—yes!"

"Then let her play!"

A disappointed cry immediately followed. No. 3 would not work. Something was wrong.

Had Zachary Kemp's presence beside the engine for that brief moment anything to do with it?

We shall see.

The engineer stirred up the fires of No. 2, and the fresh, hot steam hissed and snorted, the pumps worked faster, a heavy stream was played into the fire by Billy Gray, but the fire was gaining for all that.

To the ladder ran Lou, and up it he went, now on one side, now on the other of the hose, from which here and there, through tiny vents, little stinging jets of water darted—up—up—up—and through the window, and then, grasping the nozzle, he turned it in a new direction.

The fire was crawling toward them; it was at their very feet; the heat grew intense and the perspiration started from every pore. Billy Gray saw a point of advantage and darted toward it, axe in hand, across a piece of tumbling, shaking floor.

He was upon it, when to his horror Lou saw, springing up near the brave fellow, a dozen jets of angry flame.

"Billy—Pilly!" he called, "come back!"

He saw Billy's face as it was turned toward him, and saw that it was as pale as death; and then Billy tottered and fell prone on the trembling floor, and a little tongue of fire sprang among his hair, and, kissing the hand he threw up to protect his head, blistered it instantly and drew forth one piercing cry of agony ere he became quiet and motionless.

A groan burst from Lou's lips, and he moaned:

"Billy is dead!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A HARD BATTLE.

The young foreman of No. 6 could not ward off a tremor and a chill of horror as he saw his faithful friend and assistant, Billy Gray, drop on the floor up through which the lapping, searching flames were beginning to appear; and an agonized cry sprang to his lips involuntarily as the body lay prone and motionless.

Lou had hold of the nozzle of Steamer No. 2, and quick as thought he turned the stream on the treacherous fire crawling toward his friend; and then, shoving the nozzle into other hands, he sprang forward to rescue him.

He could feel the floor already trembling beneath his feet, and his face grew pale as death; he thought of his mother—who would care for her if anything should happen to him?

At every step he could feel the floor surge and waver, and more than one ominous crackling warned him of coming danger; but nothing daunted, he plunged forward 'mid clouds of rising steam and smoke until he stood beside the brave companion who had fallen; at which instant he felt his own brain begin to reel and totter, and at once saw the cause of Billy's strange peril; some chemicals stored below must have taken fire, and in burning produced a heavy, suffocating gas, which was rising in great volumes at that spot.

With his head spinning and reeling, and his sight blurred and defective, he stooped and seized Billy by the shoulders, and then, half-straightening himself, began dragging him away from the dangerous spot. He paused to glance around to select a direction, but to his horror found that he could see nothing but the flames, and even they seemed but a dull, dead glare; he was blinded by the gas, and the smoke palsied him.

"Where are you?" he shouted.

"Here!" came the reply.

"Guide me!" he called. "I can't see; don't let me go wrong!"

"All right; only hurry; the floor is sinking beneath your feet!"

Lou's sightless eyes were cast heavenward for one instant of silent prayer, and then he staggered along, dragging the burden he would not desert even to secure his own safety. Guiding his course by the cries of those at the nozzle, who, deluging the path he must tread, directed:

"To the right a few steps—now to the left—straight ahead—turn sharp to the left—hurry—a few steps more—"

"Thank heaven!"

Strong arms pulled rescuer and rescued off the dangerous section, even as a dreadful shriek of the timbers parting preceded the grand smash and crash of the floor as it suddenly gave way, and going downward sent flying up millions of glowing sparks.

Half a dozen No. 6 men sprang forward and clapped a wet handkerchief over Lou's eyes and face and forehead.

It restored him instantly, and soon he snatched away the handkerchief, and, catching sight of his assistant, exclaimed:

"Poor Billy!" and then, sharp, short, decisive: "Carry him to a place of safety. Axes, where are they?"

"Here!"

He had gained an idea of the center of the fire, of its heart, and, calling on his men to follow, he sprang forward, and in two minutes they had made a breach exposing the nucleus of the devastating fiend.

After two hours of ceaseless labor the last vestige of fire disappeared, and they knew that the enemy was thoroughly conquered, and, leaving a man on watch, the rest of the exhausted young firemen made their way to the open air, a sign to the immense crowd congregated near that the fire was subdued, and a hollow murmur of gratification ran from lip to lip.

Lou's men went quickly to work, returning to their places on the truck ladders, hooks, pails and axes. While they were so occupied Lou turned his attention to Billy Gray, who had been carried into the factory office, which stood detached from the main building. A physician was already in attendance, and Lou found that his wounds had already been dressed, and that Billy, though pale as a sheet, was in his senses and sitting up.

The doctor made a sling by tying a couple of handkerchiefs together, and then, with his arm in this, and with his head bandaged, Lou escorted Billy to where the truck stood ready to start.

Arm-in-arm Lou and Billy led the way.

They housed the truck, and then, after a few well-chosen words by Lou, the tired young firemen dispersed even as day's first grayish tinge broke the gloom that had overhung the eastern horizon.

## CHAPTER V.

### A PUBLIC RECOGNITION.

A week had passed away.

The factory stood in the midst of a thickly populated district, and had not the fire been so promptly taken in hand, it might have laid in ashes a good half of Carbondale. When this had been talked of with a shudder by the residents of the threatened district, they uttered many words of praise to those whose noble efforts had confined the fire to such narrow limits and spared them this awful calamity.

The town magnates laid their heads together, and after a secret conference, the mayor, with a smiling countenance, indited a letter to

LOUIS LANE,  
FOREMAN, H. & L. NO. 6,  
CARBONDALE,

inviting that company to make a public parade three days later. After receiving a favorable reply he took the first train that left town, and did not return until the morning of the parade. Opening a long box he carried under his arm in the presence of the other magnates of the town, there came a succession of "ohs!" and "ahs!" "beautiful!" and "magnificent!"

At three o'clock the doors of the H. and L.'s house were thrown open, disclosing the company at the ropes, in full parade dress.

"Forward!" ordered Lou.

As they passed out, the crowd in waiting again gave them three rousing cheers; and then, followed by the crowd, preceded by the town council and mayor in carriages, who marked out the course, the parade was commenced.

As if by magic a platform had sprung up in front of the town hall, and on this the wondering members of No. 6 saw the mayor and town council take their stand. With a faint suspicion of the truth flashing across his mind, Lou ordered a halt.

"Right-about face!" was the next order, and his men fronted the platform.

The mayor stepped forward, and the hum and buzz died away.

"FELLOW CITIZENS: Never since my election as mayor have I been called on to perform anything that affords me as much pleasure as in the present instance.

"A short time since we had a fire that might have laid waste more than half our beautiful town, but for the prompt action of one of our fire companies—Hook and Ladder No. 6 (at which cheer upon cheer broke the stillness).

"It is to their promptness, their bravery, that this awful calamity was avoided, although in saying this I do not wish to disparage the work of other companies that hurried to the scene.

"But to No. 6, we feel, belongs the meed of victory.

"I shall not burden you with a long speech, for nothing I can say can possibly enhance the display of that company's merits, and my object in speaking at all is"—here he picked up the oblong box and held up in full view, with the rays of the setting sun flashing and glittering on it, a silver trumpet—"to present this testimonial of our gratitude to Hook and Ladder No. 6. It is a silver trumpet, and bears this inscription: 'To Louis Lane, Foreman, and Members of Hook and Ladder No. 6. This is presented by the mayor and town council of Carbondale in commemoration of their noble work on the night of May 19th, 1876, and may their reputation always advance and may their glorious record never be tarnished.'

"Mr. Lane, in the name of the citizens of Carbondale, I present you with this token of their appreciation."

Lou stepped forward modestly, though his cheeks were burning, and faltering out a few words of thanks, accepted it in the name of the company.

But it was not all over yet.

"To the members of Steamer No. 2, who played a conspicuous part on that occasion, we also wish to tender a token of our approbation. Will the members present please step forward?"

Each one who stepped forward received a sealed envelope, inclosing an invitation to be present at the town hall that evening. These invitations were also received by Lou and his company, and when they reached there that evening they found a handsome collation spread for them.

Proud of the honor done them, the members of Steamer No. 2, and H. & L. No. 6, swore eternal friendship, and bound themselves to evermore stand by each other.

At midnight the reception came to a close, and they separated, and each made his way to his respective home with a glowing face and a heart swelling with honest pride.

\* \* \* \* \*

The damage had been repaired, the factory was in full blast again.

But Lou no longer held his old position; he had been advanced to a new one, of greater responsibility and much better pay.

One night, as was his custom, after getting his supper, Lou went out for a long walk, and during it he came upon Phil staggering toward home. With pity in his heart he turned and followed his old companion to see that he arrived home safely, and by doing so became the witness to a scene that surprised him greatly.

When nearly home Phil and his father came face to face, and Mr. Dobbins at once spoke sharply to Phil.

"Shut up!" said Phil, interrupting him. "I don't want any more of your darned interference. I mean to do as I please."

"Sh!" he exclaimed. "Don't talk so loud, for heaven's sake!"

"Then treat me right," growled Phil. "I've got nothing to be afraid of, although you have. It's lucky for you it was only me as found that 'ere paper in your desk."

"Sh! Phil, be quiet, for heaven's sake. Come home!"

"Give me your arm, old cock," said Phil, in a maudlin tone, and by his father was supported the few steps to the gate and into the house.

Lou turned away, thinking of the strange anonymous letter he had received, which, coupled with what he had observed in Mr. Dobbins afterward, and this puzzling conversation, made him more than suspect that gentleman of having committed something dark.

"Can it be that he has been guilty of any wrong toward me?" thought Lou. "Phil has some power, some hold over his father; what is it? What was the paper he found in his father's desk?"

Grave and thoughtful, he returned home, pondering these

questions during the livelong night, before he fell asleep, and when he was no longer awake, pondering over them in his dreams.

And the next night, when passing the old store, he saw that a new sign was up:

#### DOBBINS & SON.

Day succeeded day, and they in turn became weeks, and Lou was as much at sea as ever; he could not delve into the mystery surrounding Mr. Dobbins.

During this time Phil Dobbins had been steadily going on the down-track, and he was now the boon companion of two dissolute loafers who had come to Carbondale from where none knew.

This select trio separated late one Saturday night, with an understanding that they were to meet in a piece of dense woods just to the north of the town, the next day, to continue the carousal interrupted by the saloonkeeper's declaring he must close his place.

Phil Dobbins reeled homeward and found his father awaiting him. Instantly conceiving what was coming, he said, with a hiccup and a wave of his hand:

"Go ahead, gov'nor; I suppose it's got to come," and he steadied himself by holding fast to a center-table.

"Yes," was the father's angry remark. "It's got to come, and no mistake. I want a plain understanding with you once for all. You must keep yourself respectable or I'll kick you out! Now, which is it?"

"Kick me out?" and Phil steadied himself anew. "Do you mean to 'nsult me? Gov'nor, I don't want no nonsense; unstan'? n' if you don't like it, just say so, an' I'll split on you."

"Split on me, will you?" and the face of Matthew Dobbins lighted up with an angry, savage look. "Phil—Phil, be careful; you know too much about me for your own good."

They looked at each other fixedly for a moment, and then Phil quailed a little; but moving away unsteadily, he said, in a tone of assumed bravado:

"None of that, old man! I'm a-goin' to do as I please"; by which time he had reached the door. Holding fast to the jamb, he continued: "A word from me, gov'nor, 'ud put you in prison for twenty years; you hain't got no such a hold on me, so mind your 'p's and 'q's"'; and then he rolled off to bed, leaving his father with pale face, to angrily stride up and down for hours afterward.

"I must watch him," he muttered. "Ah! what a fool I was to ever let him get a hold on me!" and he gritted his teeth in the savageness of his anger.

What was this hidden crime?

#### CHAPTER VI.

##### BLOODSHED.

In a little nook in the woods three people were seated on the ground, facing each other, while between lay several flat bottles—part full, part empty.

They were Phil Dobbins and his two companions, and all the worse for drink.

It was a rendezvous where they had met more than once before to desecrate the Sabbath in just this manner. At Phil's words they had cried "Hear—hear!" and then, nothing loth, had obeyed his command "Down with it!"

It was clearly to be seen that this was all at Phil's expense, for they were both too seedy and shabby to be guilty of having any money in their possession other than they wormed out of their drunken companion; and the more uproarious he got and less oblivious to his surroundings the more openly they winked at each other and passed secret looks of intelligence.

"Phil, my boy, you're a brick!" said one, and clasped the hand that Phil stuck forth in acknowledgment of the compliment. "Let's drink destruction to Lou Lane and No. 6."

"With all my heart," cried Phil, and the toast was drunk.

Poor fool! He could not see that they were working him; that they were pandering to his prejudices; that, to use an old phrase, they had got on his blind side; and, calling them clever fellows, he laughed in drunken merriment.

But, all of a sudden, without any apparent cause, they became suddenly entangled in a fierce quarrel.

A dull glimmering of the truth for the first time dawned on Phil's mind, and, arising to his feet, he gasped out:

"You're nothin' but loafers. I know your game now; you'll never make anything more out of me, you sneaking thieves!"

"What!" roared the elder of the drunken loafers. "Take that back!"

"I won't," said Phil, in drunken stubbornness.

"Take that, then!" and Phil was knocked headlong to the earth.

Half-rising, he looked blankly at the man who had struck the blow for nearly a minute, then his face began to grow pale with concentrated rage, and then it began to work and twitch; his bleared eyes lighted up with fury, and he champed his teeth in vicious, vindictive rage; and then, with a cunning leer overspreading his features, he struggled to his feet and went reeling toward his antagonist, keeping one hand behind him in a stealthy, secretive way.

"Look out!" yelled the other, as Phil reeled up close to where the object of his wrath stood on his guard. "Look out! he's got something in his hand."

The warning came too late.

With a shrill, savage cry Phil sprang forward, holding a heavy rock in his uplifted hands, broke down the other's guard, and—

A moan of intense agony, a heavy fall, and the man lay on the earth.

For one instant Phil looked on this work of his hands with staring eyes that drank in every minute detail of the horrible scene, and then the blood rushed to his head so swift and fast that everything faded from his sight, and he became unconscious of all that was passing.

With a shriek of despair he sank to the ground, burying his face in the earth and closing his ears with his hands. And thus he remained until he was dragged to his feet and forced to face the witness of his awful crime.

He was sobered by the shock, and his reeling on his feet was not the reel or totter of inebriation; it was mute despair that robbed his limbs of strength.

"My heavens, Danks, what am I going to do?"

"I suppose you mean what am I going to do?" was the significant rejoinder.

"Yes—yes—yes," said Phil, hastily. "Are you going to betray me?"

"That depends," was the non-committal reply. "I swow, I don't like to see an old pal stretched dead afore my eyes."

"Let me take his place," said Phil eagerly. "I can be of more service to you than he was, and if necessary—"

"Well, how much is it worth?" was the cool rejoinder.

"I've got a hundred dollars at the store, and I'll give you another at some future time."

"Done!" said Danks, spurning the dead body with his foot. "Tell the truth, though, pard—I'll call you so now, seein' as how we are pards—I wouldn't let you off so easy only that I didn't take much stock in him myself."

With this he seized hold of the dead man's feet and dragged him into a clump of bushes, after which they left the spot, only to return at midnight with shovels. After an hour's hard work the evidence of the terrible deed was hidden from view, and the evil twain separated for the night—Phil to go home with brain teeming with awful pictures, starting at every sound; every post an officer of the law come to seize; every corner approached with trepidation lest some one behind it should spring out to seize him; and every sound that came to his ears, the distant barking of a dog, the grunt of a pig, the rattle of a wagon, the sighing of the soft wind, everything seemed to form the word—murderer.

\* \* \* \* \*

A month had glided by, and Phil Dobbins' face had begun to resume its natural color, though he was so nervous yet that every unexpected sound made him shake like an aspen. He could not look people straight in the face, and least of all Lou Lane, who he felt eyed him sharply.

No suspicion had ever entered Lou's mind as to the truth, but he had noticed a great change in Phil, and more than once had watched him closely, as if seeking to read his heart's secrets.

Musing over these strange things, trying to penetrate these unknown mysteries occupied many hours of Lou's time, and one Sunday afternoon he saw not where he was going, so deeply was he plunged in thought, until he had entered the woods. But the shade was grateful after the hot, dusty roads, so he kept straight ahead, and had penetrated the dense woods nearly a mile when he was recalled to himself by hearing his name pronounced. Glancing up, he saw Zachary Kemp before him.

"Poor fellow!" thought Lou, for Zachary Kemp was credited with having been out of his mind since the night of the fire, when nearly every dollar he had in the world was swept away.

"How are you?" said Lou. "Where have you kept yourself since the night of the fire at the factory?"

"In my hut here," said Zachary. "You know I'm too poor to live in the village and pay rent, so I built myself a hut here in the woods, and keep myself on the game I kill."

It was only a few steps away, and Lou could not forbear a pitying look at Zachary, as at one glance he took in the pitiful hut and its rude contents. Zachary caught the spirit of the look, and sharply said:

"I understand! It's poor, but I can't afford any better; curses fall on the heads of the managers of the Carbondale Insurance Company. They robbed me of all I had, but—never mind—never mind—" and his face lighted up with a cunning leer, "I'll be square with 'em yet—I'll be square with 'em yet!"

Lou had no wish to remain long amid such squalidness and apparent discomfort, and soon made a movement toward departure. As he did so, Zachary took from his pocket a rusty pocket-knife, and said:

"Lou, will you be kind enough to give this to Phil Dobbins?"

"No; I never have anything to say to him."

But when Zachary seemed distressed by his refusal, he took it and put it in his pocket, promising to deliver it.

The very next day presented an opportunity of fulfilling his mission.

"Here's something that belongs to you," said Lou, offering Phil the knife after having stopped him.

"Where did you get it?"

"It was found in the woods by a person who begged me to return it."

Phil snatched the knife, and clutching it nervously, hurried away, and Lou, looking after him, could almost have sworn he saw him stagger.

"How much does he know?" gasped Phil. "Danks must know of this at once, and if he thinks there's anything in it, Lou Lane, you must die!"

Little did Lou dream the peril he put himself in by the bearing of crazy Zachary's message to Phil. But let us not anticipate.

At the H. and L.'s house, whither his footsteps were directed, he found an order for a general parade two days later.

After a wearying parade and a lengthy review the companies separated, and each went its own way in the darkness, for night had some time since fallen over the face of nature.

The truck was housed, and its various members were gathered in little knots, some sitting, some standing, discussing the events of the day, when there suddenly boomed out on the night air the alarm of fire.

The trumpet he still held in his hand sprang to Lou's lips.

"Man the ropes!"

In wild excitement, overturning chairs, upsetting tables, clapping on their hats, they sprang to perform their duty.

## CHAPTER VII.

### NO. 6 TO THE RESCUE.

Every member of the gallant company forgot his fatigue—forgot the exhaustion due to the long parade—when the church bell rang out that alarm of fire, and ere the first deep booming note had died away they were at the ropes in response to Lou's trumpet command:

"Forward!"

The wheels rumbled across the wooden floor as the doors swung open with a crash, and then their sound became muffled in the dust of the road.

As they drew nearer the source of the fire, they began to guess that it was this man's house or that man's; only Lou guessed correctly that it was the row of wooden tenements of which Gertie Kingston was an inmate.

He saw Gertie now very frequently, for she worked in the same factory where he was employed.

Unconsciously he quickened his pace and his company sprang forward to keep up with him; a few minutes and they came abreast with No. 3, whose company was being urged to greater exertions by Phil Dobbins, who was dancing on ahead, shrieking and alternately cursing under his breath.

Turning a corner, No. 6 arrived upon the scene; it was the tall frame row of tenements, and being dry they burned like tinder, and Lou saw at an instant's glance that nothing could save them, that they were absolutely doomed; still, he could not stand idly by, and felt that he must work while there was a chance of saving a single plank or beam.

"Make way, there!" he shouted, and the crowd falling back, No. 6 dashed up before the burning buildings.

Lou glanced at the house in which Gertie and her mother lived, and saw that it was wrapped in flames from foundation to ridge-pole. It was the last but one of the south end of the row, and the last house was now all ablaze in its lower part.

"Are all the people out?" Lou called, in a loud voice.

"No—no—no!" was shouted from all sides. "Mrs. Kingston and her daughter have not got out yet."

Lou shuddered, and now knew the meaning of the many pairs of staring eyes directed at the windows of the second story of the burning house.

A wild, hoarse murmur caused him to quickly turn, and he saw Gertie and her mother at the only window through which the flames were not pouring. With a bound he was beside the truck, and with his own hands helped to straighten the ladder, and when it was up, sprang on the rounds and commenced rapidly ascending.

In a minute he was up, and glancing inside, he saw that the interior of the building was a mass of fire. It was the hall he gazed into, and he could not but shudder as he saw a great volume of fire that roared and rolled and bounded up the staircase from the floor below.

"We tried to escape by the stairs, but were driven back," said Gertie, quite self-possessed, and then tried to soothe her frightened mother by saying:

"There—there, mamma, the danger's all over now."

But her efforts were rendered futile by an angry flame that stole along the window jamb, and darting out a vicious tongue, severely burned Mrs. Kingston's hand. Moaning and shrieking, it was all they could do to prevent her from flinging herself headlong out.

"My mother first, please," said Gertie, with a look of gratitude directed at Lou, whose heart was now beating fast and furious.

A few minutes later both Gertie and her mother were safe and in good hands.

"Is everybody out now?" shouted Lou, after a pause of a few seconds to recover his breath and his self-command.

"Yes—that's all—yes—yes!" replied a hundred voices.

He snatched his trumpet from the hands that had picked it up when he had thrown it down ere mounting the ladder, and gave the order.

"Remove this ladder before it takes fire. It's no use, boys, we can't save these buildings. The only way to stop the fire is to tear down the cottage that stands between them and the church. Get your hooks. To work, boys—to work!"

With a cry of approval the company rushed to obey their foreman's command, and seizing hooks and axes, the cottage was demolished. Steamer No. 2, working hand-in-hand with H. and L. No. 6, deluged the church and other adjoining buildings, and thus the fire was confined to the row of factory tenements, of which a few hours later there remained but a mass of glowing embers, rising above which were great clouds of steam.

No. 6's work was done, and Lou gave the order to load up. While his tired company was gladly doing this, he sought out Gertie and her mother, and sent them to his mother's humble home. Then, returning to his company with his trumpet under his arm, he led them slowly to their house, where, after a few remarks in praise of their gallant conduct—never saying a word about his own—he dismissed them, and shortly afterward, locking the doors, started for home. But the mother who watched and waited for his return in company with those whose lives Lou had saved, watched and waited the livelong night, and a wild rumor spread like lightning through Carbondale early the next morning that the gallant young foreman had been found murdered.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SARGASSO SEA.

We must now take up the thread of our story that has to do with Harvey Lane, Lou's father.

As will be remembered, he concluded his business and started for home on board of the Eagle, which was reported to have foundered and gone down in mid-ocean.

For three days the gale continued unabated, during which time the Eagle behaved nobly, but on the morning of the fourth day, when, with the rising sun, the gale increased its fury, the brow of her captain became darkened with gloomy doubts and forebodings.

His fears, unspoken, scarce admitted to himself—proved

not unfounded, and before noon the dismal news rapidly spread that the ship had sprung a leak.

The pumps were at once set going, but, despite the most manful exertions, the water continued gaining in the hold. At sunset three feet were reported, at midnight it had increased to five, and by six the next morning it was nearly nine feet.

"Is there any hope of saving the vessel, captain?" asked Mr. Lane.

"Not much," was the gloomy reply; "she's sinking faster every hour, even when we've got every man on board at work. If the wind goes down we may save her, but it's doubtful."

He added the last clause after a brooding hesitation, as if he would have concealed this knowledge from his passengers if he could; and Mr. Lane turned away with a sinking heart as he thought of his loved ones at home; but a ray of hope lightened the gloom around his heart, when as the day wore on the gale began to abate. Gradually the wind died away, and the sea began to grow calm.

But it had come too late, as he soon learned, when toward sundown he saw the carpenter and his men busy constructing several large rafts.

"Has it come to this?" he questioned the captain.

"Yes."

"There is no hope?"

"None."

"And we shall be compelled to trust ourselves on those rafts?"

"There is no other resource. The boats were all smashed and destroyed by the storm."

"When shall we put away from the vessel?"

"To-morrow morning about daylight, I calculate," was the reply. "That is taking into account the way the water has gained during the last half dozen hours."

Mr. Lane went forward and watched the sailors as with darkened, gloom-filled faces they silently pursued their work. Their looks for the first time impressed him with a sense of their real danger, and he sighed when, in response to a question, the first officer returned:

"There's no use concealing it, sir; we're far off the regular track of vessels, and our chances of being picked up are slim—very slim. Heaven help us. But we'll hope for the best."

That night he managed to get a few hours' sleep, though his rest could not but be feverish amid such surroundings, and with such dark prospects ahead.

At daybreak they were all summoned forward, when Mr. Lane saw floating beside the vessel—now but a few feet above the water—two large rafts, and another that was smaller, each of which had lashed to it a cask of water and provisions in bags.

"It is time we were off," said the captain, gloomily. "You all understand the aspect of affairs, so I'll not explain anything but this: There are thirty-one of us on board; the large rafts are calculated to hold thirteen people each, and the smaller one five. To make it a fair thing, I have numbered the rafts one, two, three; in this hat are thirty-one pieces of paper, each bearing a raft number, which entitles the man who draws a number to a place on the raft of that number. Who draws first?"

To set the example, as the others seemed to hold back, Mr. Lane advanced and drew forth a piece of paper; it was number 3, and his place was on the small raft. Without a word he clambered over the gunwale and took his place.

One by one the drawers took their places on one or the other of the rafts; and the captain took the last ticket, which proved to be 3, and boarding the small raft, they pushed away and then laid to, in order to see the last of the ill-fated Eagle.

It was near the middle of the day when they saw her suddenly lurch, and then like a flash she was gone, and then the three raft-loads of human beings turned their backs on the scene, and bending their sails, stood away from the spot, favored by a light wind.

When the night fell the rafts were separated some distance, and when morning broke the occupants of raft number 3 were alone in the waste of water, for their companions had disappeared.

A week passed away, and it was near the middle of a dark night that the captain sprang to his feet with a cry of alarm. A low, sullen, distant roar had awakened him.

"A squall—head on!" he cried. "Down with the sail!" and sprang forward to help execute the order.

But with the fury of a fiend the squall burst on them, a tremendous sea engulfed them, the sail was rent into tatters and carried away in shreds.

Mr. Lane had flung his arms around the mast, and there he hung for the next few minutes, while the wind shrieked by with the fury of a thousand devils, and the white-capped waves buried them, or tossed them high in the air, or sent them darting back beneath some giant shock, or impelled them forward with the velocity of a cannon-ball, or sent them whirling and spinning like a top.

And then the shriek of the wind grew fainter in the distance, died out slowly, and was gone.

Dreading to do so, yet with a terrible fascination impelling him, Mr. Lane looked around him, and saw that the raft contained but two occupants—the captain and himself.

Stunned by the awful calamity, neither ventured to speak or make any further examination, and it was not until morning broke that they discovered that every movable thing, except the water-cask, had been swept away. Gazing blankly into each other's faces, they saw plainly written there their own thoughts—starvation was before them.

They were spared its terrible accompaniment—thirst; still it was the commencement of a horrible experience that pen has not the power to describe.

A week later it would have been impossible to recognize the captain or Mr. Lane in the two red-eyed, pale-faced, shriveled-figured inhabitants of the raft. In three days more they were but frames of bones with the skin tightly drawn over them; their clothing, ever well filled, now hung limp and loose, or in the breeze flapped around their attenuated forms.

At first they had conversed together to keep up their spirits, but this was done with now, and they had not spoken for several days, and each, warned by his own horrible thoughts of his companion, kept his bleared, blood-shot orbs fastened on the other to prevent any surprise from being killed by the other to satisfy that horrible longing for food.

The captain, stout and robust and hairy though he was, appeared to suffer the most, and one morning, after a painfully watchful night on Mr. Lane's part to prevent the captain's falling on him unawares, that gentleman was surprised to see the captain stretched out prone and motionless. Mr. Lane crawled to his side and found that the spark of life still lingered in his frame; but it was even then flickering, and soon went out, and Mr. Lane was alone with the dead.

An hour passed, during which Lane's eyes had been fastened on the body, which seemed already to be festering with corruption; had been fastened on it gloatingly.

Then he felt in his pocket and drew out a pocket-knife; opening the blade, he crawled toward the corpse like a hungry jackal, and cutting into the skinny covering of the bones, stripped off a piece.

He was beside himself when he did this, and his eyes sparkled as a miser's would over his gold, when a revulsion of feeling came, and with a cry of agonized horror he flung the flesh from him into the sea; then with his foot shoved the corpse to the edge of the raft, and then let it fall into the water. He watched it with his hungry eyes until it sank, and then his swollen, baked lips murmured a few words of thanks to Heaven for enabling him to overcome the horrible temptation.

The day dragged slowly away, and it was nearly night when he uttered a low cry of joy; then rising a little, he shaded his eyes with his hand, and gazed long and earnestly ahead. Was it land he saw, or was it only a phantom conjured up by his distempered imagination?

Night closed in, and though he strove to keep awake, he slumbered fitfully throughout the night, and starting from one of these catnaps just as day was breaking, he saw only a quarter of a mile away a great dark mass, which he conceived was land, which he persuaded himself was land, though his better knowledge told him that it could not be.

Slowly, easily, but steadily, he was carried toward this mass that was so darkly outlined on the surface of the water, but it was not until he was within a few feet of it that he would admit the truth; and then he murmured:

"Heaven help me! It is the Sargasso Sea, near which no ship ever comes."

With a silent prayer, utterly hopeless, he laid himself down to die.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE FIREBUG.

Ill news travels on fleet wings, and in a few minutes after a passing laborer going to his work had discovered the body it was announced by a dozen people, not one of whom did aught but stare helplessly at the poor lad. They had not stirred him from the spot where he was found, but let him as

he fell, his bare head resting lower than his feet, his hair dark and muddy, his features drawn up with an expression of terrible pain, his legs drawn up and contorted with agony; one hand stretched out by his side.

In fifteen minutes a large crowd had gathered, but still none dared advance and touch the body, but all turned away with a shudder at sight of the parted lips and staring, though half-closed eyes.

Then came a physician, who at once made his way through the crowd, and kneeling beside the body, laid the head in a more comfortable position, and then kindly, tenderly, but firmly, loosened the grasp of the fingers and straightened out the arm.

His next move was to tear away the clothing, thus disclosing a small round hole where the assassin's bullet had entered. He placed his hand over Lou's heart, and held it there for two or three minutes, his face grave and thoughtful.

A brother physician arrived, and in a low voice asked:

"Is he dead?"

"I can't tell," was the low reply. "I don't feel his heart beating, though. One thing in his favor is that this must have happened three or four hours ago at least, to judge by the congealment of the blood, while his body is still warm and limber, which it would not be if he was dead."

"Let me see," and the newcomer made a long and anxious examination, and at last said: "I agree with you; I think he is alive, and that's about all."

"Then suppose you go and break the news to his mother, and I'll follow with the body."

"Good!" exclaimed the other, and at once departed on his mission of mercy.

Willing hands brought some boards covered with new hay for a litter, and then they started toward Lou's house, at that very instant plunged into deepest grief by the doctor's ill news.

As they were about to start a pale face struggled through the crowd, and a pair of eyes stared hard at Lou for a minute; then the owner of the face and eyes slunk back, and some one asked:

"Is he dead?"

"I don't know," was the reply, receiving which, Phil Dobbins, for he it was, emerged from the crowd, and hurried along toward a certain disreputable lodging-house in a low and dirty part of the town.

"Is Danks up yet?" he inquired from the beetle-bowed, rufianly looking proprietor of the combined lodging-house and whisky-mill.

"No," was the surly answer.

"Then I'll go up to his room."

Phil climbed the dark and dirty stairs, passed along a narrow, dark hall, whose smoky ceiling was cob-webbed from end to end, turned into another, and at its end knocked at a door, and knocked again louder when no response came.

Presently the door was opened by Danks, who, now that he was mussed up and fierce-looking from sleepiness, looked more evil than ever.

"What's up?" he growled, stepping back to let his visitor enter.

"He!" said Phil, mysteriously.

"Who? What?"

"Lou Lane."

"What of him?"

"He's dead."

"Is that so?" was Danks' cool remark.

"You ought to know best."

"Why?"

"Because you shot him."

"I didn't shoot him," replied Danks.

"Then who did?"

"I'm sure I couldn't say," and Danks began humming a tune.

"Then you don't know anything about it?"

"Hain't I told you so? Nothing 'cept what you told me."

Phil arose to go, and had got as far as the door, when Danks called after him:

"I'm a-waitin' for that ere money."

"All right, you shall have it soon," and then he left the place.

Danks shut the door, and throwing himself on the bed, chuckled audibly.

"Ha, ha! Think I'm a-goin' to give myself away to you? Not much! You'd have as good a hold on me then as I've got on you. Oh, no. I couldn't bleed you so freely then, you poor fool!" and kicking up his heels he dove under the covers, and

soon took up the snore at the point where he had left off when awakened by Phil's knocking. He had not been long asleep when the window with the paper-patched glass was softly raised, and a head protruded into the room. It was Zachary Kemp's small head and wizard features that were there presented, and it was his shrewd, cunning eyes that gazed on the sleeper. He stretched out his hand and softly drew from the hip-pocket of Danks' pants, which hung across a chair, a revolver. A smile of triumph lighted up his wrinkled face, the head disappeared, the sash was softly lowered, and Zachary softly stole along a bare beam, all that remained of a balcony which had once been there.

Avoiding the frequented streets, he made his way to the old hut in the woods, and hunting around, finally found a tin box; in this he placed the revolver, and then buried the box in a hole which he afterward filled up with earth, packed it down, and strewed it with leaves to hide his work.

About midnight he started toward the town, muttering to himself as he went:

"They beggared me, ha-ha! but I'll have revenge, I will. The Carbondale Insurance Company shall suffer in their pockets—and that is the tenderest part of it."

He entered the town, and stealing along, finally made a halt in the rear of a building, and was making preparations to fire it, indeed, had it all ready and was about to strike a match, when a heavy footfall and an approaching figure, dimly seen through the darkness, caused him to desist, trembling with fear of discovery.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE FIREBUG'S WORK.

Zachary Kemp trembled with fear of discovery, and softly shrank back as the footsteps advanced, until he was screened by a hogshead that stood at one corner of the building to catch the rain-water shed from the roof, peeping out from behind which he watched the newcomer's suspicious movements.

Zachary thought he could recognize the man even in the darkness as the person whose revolver he had stolen that very morning, Gangler Danks. Neither was he mistaken, for this individual it was and no other.

It was hard on toward the middle of the day when that personage roused from the slumber he had fallen into after the departure of his visitor, Phil Dobbins. Tumbling out of bed, he performed some very farcical attempts at ablution, and then commenced putting on his clothes, meanwhile smiling over some pleasing recollection and muttering to himself:

"Young Dobbins thought I'd give myself away to him. Ha, ha! what a fool he is! I did the job for my own safety, not his and one of these days, when I light out of here, I'll leave him in a pretty hole, hanged if I don't, for satisfaction for the loss of my pal!"

"By the way, I guess it would be best to take that empty shell out of my barker and put in a fresh cartridge, as—hello! What! Gone!" and he clapped his hand on his hip-pocket, and then one and another in various parts of his clothing, and where he did not find it he stood stock-still in the middle of the room, breathing hard and gazing blankly at the dirty wall.

The villain trembled a little, for he feared it portended immediate danger to himself.

He finished dressing in a hurry, and went downstairs and ordered something to eat; along with this he ordered a quart of beer, which he invited the landlord to partake of, proposing to draw out of him all he knew of the recent tragedy.

Presently the subject drifted in by the landlord's remarking:

"It was a rough thing, that attack on young Lane."

"What was it?" asked Danks. "That young fellow who came in this morning told me something had happened, but I was too sleepy to exactly get an idea of what it was all about."

"Well, they found young Lane, the foreman of H. and L. No. 6, you know, lying on the road with a bullet-hole in him; they picked him up for dead—"

"Well, isn't he?" interrupted Danks.

"No; so it 'pears, leastways that's what they say now; but they do say he can't live long, and that he ain't been sensible yet."

"Hum! Bad—very bad," commented Danks, and he really meant what he said, for in his own mind he thought it bad—very bad for him that he had not made sure of his work.

"I've got things too nice to skip out and leave 'em," he mused; "still, under the circumstances, I guess it would be as well to make my 'stake' as soon as possible and light out."

That jewelry store must be cracked this very night. I'll make Dobbins fork over to-morrow, then away I go."

At ten o'clock that night he repaired to his room, and after locking his door, opened a carpet-bag and took from it another revolver, a companion to the one he had lost, and after loading it, secured it on his person; then, from the same receptacle, he took out a variety of burglarious instruments, and after a little thought selected such as he considered it likely he would need.

And this was what drew him to the spot where Zachary Kemp had gone to do his incendiary work. Zachary from his place of concealment could see the burglar's every movement.

Danks had inspected the premises before, and had no need to delay in planning out his work. He had decided in favor of attacking a wooden shutter, and to this he at once gave his attention. A jimmy soon forced it open; the raising of the sash inside was easily accomplished, and then, after a minute's hesitation, he crawled into the store.

Meanwhile, as he watched, Zachary Kemp's eyes had begun to glisten brightly, and when Danks had disappeared a chuckle escaped him as he arose to his feet. A heavy joist lay near by; to this he glided, and returning with it, suddenly closed the shutter, and put the joist against it as a brace; then with the rush of feet sounding in his ears, and the frightened burglar's cries, he struck a match and fired the material he had piled against the building and fled.

Only too well did Zachary Kemp know how to do this business, and in less than five minutes the whole back part of the low wooden building was ablaze, and when at last Danks got the window open, it was only to be driven back by the flames.

Like a hunted wolf he turned and darted toward the front of the store, and commenced work on the fastenings; his breath came thick and fast, and his nervous haste only delayed him; only another fastening between him and liberty. It was removed, his hand grasped the knob, he was opening the door—

"Fire! Fire!"

He tried to slink back—too late, he was discovered, so he flung the door wide open. He gathered himself for a spring, when the man who had given the alarm sprang forward with a cry of satisfaction and seized him by the throat.

"Caught at last!" cried the man. "So you're the firebug, are you? Heaven pity you if you fall into the people's hands," and then he gritted his teeth and struck savagely at Danks, who had seized hold of his antagonist's hand with his teeth.

"Fire! Fire!"

The cry was caught up and rang out block after block; windows went up, heads were poked out; yells, shouts, the heavy tramp of feet, the mounting flames tinging the sky with a ruddy hue, and amid all the distant roar of excitement and the nearer roar of the fire the two men battled savagely. The one sure that he had captured the firebug of Carbondale, and determined that he should not escape, the other fighting for liberty with the desperation of fear of a cornered desperado.

Once, twice Danks sought to reach his revolver and failed, and at each attempt his antagonist gained a slight advantage and kept forcing him back into the store, the rear part of which was by this time one mass of fire. A dreadful thought crossed Danks' mind, and he resisted less, allowing himself to be forced back till he was near the creeping flames, as they lapped foot after foot of the floor in its scorching embrace; wasted these moments while the roar of voices and the tread of feet, and the exciting tumultuous noise grew nearer; but Danks had a purpose, and all of a sudden he put all of his strength into one mighty, despairing effort, wrenched loose, caught up his antagonist, and flung him headlong into the flames, and then, with eyes wild and blood-shot, and face haggard and pale, he rushed toward the door.

The wild alarm of fire broke with thunderous sound from the bell; he reached the door, the rumble of the engines reached his ears he heard the surge of voices and stopped like a wolf at bay on the threshold.

A flaming figure dashed out past him; it was his late antagonist, and when he had pointed to Danks and uttered a few words, the crowd dashed upon him with a roar of anger.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE VERDICT OF THE MOB.

The weeping mother looked up when she saw borne through the door the limp figure of her son. When they laid it on the bed she parted the men almost fiercely, and then, flinging

herself on the bed, seized the inanimate figure in her arms and wailed:

"Oh, my son—my son—my son! Dead! dead! dead!" and raising herself up, she bent her head to kiss the pale, cold lips; and then, overcome by the sight, she uttered one heart-rending moan, and with a sigh had drifted away.

Tenderly they lifted her up and carried her into another room, where Mrs. Kingston followed, who immediately took charge of her, thus relieving the doctor to return to Lou.

Hours passed, and still the two physicians were beside Lou's bed; and in the meantime fleet-footed messengers had come and gone continually for this thing or that at the bidding of the physicians, who worked with a heart in trying to fan into a brighter flame the tiny spark of life that flickered in Lou's breast.

The bullet had been removed, the wound had been dressed, and at three o'clock all that remained to do was to wait until some change occurred, possibly for the better, a thousand times more likely to be that great change which must come to us all—that change when we must lay down this earthly casket of ours, and on the wings of our last drawn breath dive into that mysterious realm—the future beyond the grave.

The midnight hour was near, when the physician bent his head low to the bed and gazed beneath the low drooping eyelids into the firmly set eyes; but their dull, dead stare was gone now, and they glistened brightly, as the candle flickering to go out suddenly flashes up one brilliant tongue ere it expires in total darkness.

He whispered to Gertie, who was in the room as much as she was allowed:

"The worst is to be feared, for he still remains unconscious. The only hope is to arouse him in some way, if it can be done. I shall be frank with you, and tell you that it will do him good or end his existence like a lightning flash. You understand, so be calm and bring his mother here."

Once more Gertie glided from the room, and when she returned Mrs. Lane and her mother were with her.

"Restrain yourself, my dear lady," said the physician to Mrs. Lane. "We must try and arouse him, it's the only chance; be calm, now! That's right," as she choked back her sobs and bent above the bed. "Now call him!"

"Lou!" she called, softly.

The anxious eyes of the doctor could detect no response to the call, not so much as the moving of a finger or an eyelid.

"Try again," he said. "Louder!"

"Lou!"

Still no response.

"It is useless," thought the physician, and added in a whisper, "it will be all over soon. He's dying now!"

He could see that a few seconds more was all that was left, fancied the last breath was then being drawn, and had arisen to close Lou's eyes in death, when—

A far-away sound that swelled in volume as it neared them resolved itself into an alarm of fire. It was the bell booming forth its warning note to the brave firemen.

Lou's lips moved, and the physician's closely put ear distinguished—just breathed and no more—the words:

"Man the ropes! Let No. 6 be the first to the fire!"

In a minute the doctor laid his head back on the pillow, just freshly arranged by Gertie; the eyelids drooped again, and he lay quiet and still as before, but it was not the stupor of death—it was the unconsciousness of sleep.

And the three women offered up a prayer of fervent thanks to the throne on high.

An hour nearly had passed, and the sleeper moved uneasily, as if he saw something before his mental vision. Could his mind by any possible manner penetrate space and see what was transpiring without?

It would seem so, for the doctor thought he heard these words: "They are going to hang him."

Who?

When the dying figure, wrapped in flames, cried out to the crowd, pointing to Danks:

"There is the fire-bug!" it was seized with one maddened impulse to rush upon him and rend him limb from limb, and Danks turned paler than before, and grew so faint that he clutched the door-jamb for support when he heard that angry roar—heard the maddened cries of execration, and saw the crowd surging toward him.

He turned and fled, preferring the mercy of the fire to the mercy of the angry mob. The back door had been eaten away by the fire, and a burning strip of floor still remained reaching to it. One glance behind at the angry, threatening crowd pouring into the front of the store, and he plunged across the burn-

ing space, singeing eyebrows, and whiskers, and hair, blistering face and hands, setting his pants on fire. A bound and he was clear of the fire, and blistered his hands still more in crushing out the fire that had attacked his pants; then glared around him, and dove into an outhouse, where he lay trembling and shaking, and listening to the noises outside.

A rush, a shout, and No. 6 was on hand; another shout, another rush, and Steamer No. 2 had arrived. Hard work was before them. They all missed the brave example, the cheery voice, the clear head of the young foreman just passing the portals of death, but they did well their duty, and once again the devouring element was mastered.

When the flames were subdued, savage crowds of men commenced a hunt for the fire-bug, and he was drawn from his hiding-place like a badger from his hole. The half dozen men who captured him knew that lynching was a crime, yet they meant to do it, and for that reason did not inform the crowd of the capture, but stole away as best they could with their prisoner. On the way they procured a rope, and near the outskirts of Carbondale they halted beneath a tree and bound themselves by a solemn oath never to reveal aught that had passed and would pass further.

"We must hurry," said one; "make a noose in the rope, quick! Now throw the other end over that limb."

Cowed and crestfallen, and utterly miserable, Danks saw these preparations made.

The noose was about to be placed around his neck, when with a wild yell he flung himself furiously on those before him, broke away through the circle about him and dashed away, even as a mob came up.

He eluded them somehow, though the search was continued for two days. And while he was panting and expecting momentary death, the victim of his bullet was slowly recovering his health and strength. And, sitting up in bed a few mornings later, Lou said, in a confident tone:

"Father is still living! I know it!"

"How?"

"When I was so near death, drifting away, I saw him on a raft in the midst of a great dark patch of something."

They thought his mind wandered, but he told the truth, for on his raft Mr. Lane was still circling around and around the Sargasso Sea.

## CHAPTER XII.

### PHIL DOBBINS IN A CORNER.

Phil Dobbins arrived at the scene of the fire too late to see Danks in the door of the jewelry store. But he heard the execrations that were poured on the fire-bug's head, and heard the angry threats of lynching could they but lay their hands on him. At length some casual remark concerning the man's description gave him a start, for it brought forcibly to mind the personal appearance of Danks.

A few questions soon left no doubt in his mind that it was Danks and no one else that these threats were lavished on.

And so when the fire was mastered, and the rumor ran through the crowd that the fire-bug had been carted away by a half dozen men, he was one of the first to lead the hot chase after the lynching party, and his guilty soul trembled with joy when he thought he saw the noose placed about the neck of Danks; but it fell as rapidly when with that cry Danks broke away for himself and bounded away.

One day Phil's father called him into his private office, and then handed him a letter, the superscription of which was so miserably indited as to be almost undecipherable, but which his father had made out to be addressed to Phil, who at once tore it open.

The penmanship of the letter was in keeping with the superscription, and while Phil was trying to decipher it, Mr. Dobbins glanced over his shoulder and saw half a dozen better written words ere Phil could conceal it. The letter was from Danks, and was short and sharp:

"I want to see you, Phil, as soon as you get this. I'll wait for you every night at eleven o'clock in the woods where we buried \_\_\_\_\_. You know the spot, of course. Don't fail me, and if you try to betray me I'll have you hung higher than Haman."

DANKS."

If he only dared betray him!

But, oh! it would be putting the noose around his own neck.

He dared not disobey, and, thoroughly wretched, he crawled along the roads that night, more like a slimy reptile than a man clad in God's own image.

He had been at the appointed place more than half an hour silently watching, when the bushes suddenly rustled and a

dark figure was beside him, and Danks' voice broke the silence of the gloomy night in the forest:

"You are prompt. I'm glad to see it, for the pesky letter gave me trouble enough, what with writing it with my hands all puffed up with blisters, and then walking ten miles to Beavertown in the middle of the night to mail it. I suppose you brought it with you?"

"Brought what?"

"Some money."

"No," faltered Phil, "you didn't say anything about money."

"You might a-known without tellin' that I wanted money so's to get away from this infernal hole," roared Danks.

"I've got five dollars or so," said Phil, nearly beside himself.

"Five dollars!" was the contemptuous rejoinder. "Go home at once, and return here to-morrow night at the same hour with five hundred dollars for me. If you don't I've got a written confession I shall leave behind which will procure you a hemp cravat with the knot under the ear. Now go," he said, surlily, "and don't fail me, or—"

With a yell Phil jumped to one side as he felt the cold muzzle of Danks' revolver pressed threateningly against his head; and when adjured again to go, lost no time in darting away. All night long he brooded over the matter of the money and arose hot and feverish and undecided. He feared to apply to his father, and yet what other resource had he?

He put it off all day long, until nearly closing time, when he presented himself and his request for five hundred dollars.

"What do you want it for?"

"For—for—a private matter," stammered Phil.

"I understand, but you can't have it."

"Then," said Phil, "as a member of the firm, I shall raise it on our note."

"You'll do no such thing," retorted Mr. Dobbins. "You have no power to do so, as I took very good care that you shouldn't, and every business house in town is acquainted with the fact."

"Then," and Phil's face was flushed with angry obstinacy, "then let me give you to understand, Mr. Dobbins, that if I don't share the game I shall not hesitate in telling who plucked the pigeon."

"What do you mean?" and Mr. Dobbins was on his feet, with eyes flashing vindictively.

"I mean that I shall expose you as a forger and a thief!"

"And I shall expose you, Phil, as a mur—"

Phil gasped and shrunk away.

"Ah! you understand. Now, Phil, go your way with your secrets, and I'll go mine. I can guess why you want this money, but will not give it, for it would be but the prelude to such demands continually. Your secret is never safe while that man lives!"

Phil groaned; he was beaten on every hand, was hopelessly cornered.

As a rat will turn when trampled upon, this very circumstance aroused a desperation in Phil's heart that was more sanguine than courage, more fiendish than hate.

At ten o'clock that night he stood in his room ready to go out to the meeting. He drew from his sleeve a long, newly-sharpened dagger. Feeling of its edge, he set out to meet Danks. When he reached the meeting place, Danks was there and asked for the money, at the same time drawing a revolver.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE MEETING IN THE WOODS.

Phil slid forward a few steps, until they stood face to face, separated by three or four feet. Then Phil begged he would put up his revolver.

There seemed to flash into the villain's mind some glimmering of the truth, for his tone became savage at once, and he stood in a half-guarding position.

"Ho, ho! It seems you're afraid of me," he said with a sneer.

"You appear to be afraid of me," returned Phil, "or you wouldn't hang on to that pistol so tightly."

Taking this as a taunt, Danks took one savage step forward, and cried hoarsely:

"Now, see here, no more of this. Out with the money at once," and he stretched out his hand.

Phil advanced his left hand as if to meet it, but clenching it, suddenly struck Danks a blow in the mouth, flung up his right arm, then brought it down. At the same instant that the blow was descending Danks seemed to comprehend the situation, and quickly threw up his left arm to ward off the blow, and threw up his right to bring his revolver in range, and as he staggered and fell with a groan he pulled the trigger.

Phil uttered a cry of mortal agony and staggered back. With a bound to one side he interposed the trunk of a tree between himself and his prostrate victim, and then remained, not daring to venture forth. The echoes of the shot died away, and then there reigned an awful stillness that impressed Phil with a greater sense of fear than anything else could have done.

At last, after a long period of unbroken quietness, he ventured to sneak out from his place of concealment, and after much hesitation he glided up to where he had seen Danks fall. Arriving there, he affected to laugh at his fears of a moment before, for Danks lay there motionless as a log. Phil remembered his threat of the night before, concerning the written confession, and when he had satisfied himself that his foe was dead he began a search for it. He found what he thought felt like several letters in the breast pocket of his coat, and was examining them as well as he could, when, happening to take a backward step, his foot rested on the body, slipped off, and Phil fell. He heard a tearing sound as of paper, but though he went down on his knees and felt carefully around with his hands, could not find that he had torn off any fragments, and put the papers in his pocket.

After taking everything of value to be found on Danks' body, Phil dragged it into a close pile of brush, kicked up the fresh earth about the spot, and then hurried away through the woods toward home, feeling relieved in mind. Aye, his dreadful crime, instead of adding a weight to his mind, relieved it. And he exulted in the thought that it was known only to himself.

But was it?

He had been gone scarce more than ten minutes when a great, round, fiery eye pierced the gloom of night, and advanced from the spot where it first became visible until it reached the side of Danks. It was a dark-lantern in the hands of Zachary Kemp. The fire-bug started when, on flashing the light into the man's face, he recognized the person he had entrapped in the jeweler's store. With a half-pitying exclamation he stooped down beside Danks, finally arose with a hopeful face, and hurried away, only to shortly return with some bandages.

Crazy Zachary had been willing that this man should suffer in his stead, but he had not wished it to cost him his life; so when he saw Danks thus, and imagined that it was in some way an outgrowth of his own work, he felt called upon to do all in his power to restore to full vigor the feeble spark of life that was left.

After a while Danks recovered consciousness, and Zachary, by great exertion, got him to his hut, where he attended him faithfully through the weeks that followed, during which Phil Dobbins daily expected to hear of the finding of the body. He was tempted to return to the spot in search of his hat, through which Danks' bullet had gone, and a part of a letter which he found had been torn off when he fell; but he did not go.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### AROUND THE SARGASSO SEA.

Around and around that great circle went the raft and its occupant; always slowly moving onward, yet ever in the one position; always going, yet always kept within the confines of the Sargasso Sea.

Meanwhile his water was slowly going out; he husbanded the last few drops, oh, how jealously, and yet the time came when that, too, was gone.

Then, little by little, the pangs of thirst began to assail him, until at last he suffered agonies untold.

It did not come on all at once, but creeping steadily, augmented and grew stronger, until beneath it reason began to totter.

He must have been without drink a week or more, and his heart's action was weak and fluctuating; the strength was gone from its pulsations, and his life was slowly ebbing away. He struggled against a drowsiness that began to steal over him, but in vain. It overpowered him at last and he drifted away, and—

How long he lay thus he never knew; perhaps hours, perhaps days. But he was conscious of a dreamy wakening at last, with all its attendant miseries. He struggled up a little bit, but his eyes were blurred and bloodshot, and all he could see was the water stretching about him, for a distance of a hundred feet or so.

The agony he felt brought back with tenfold power an awful thought that had been in his mind before, and turning his face toward heaven, he moved his lips.

"Heaven forgive me!" was the voiceless appeal he made. Then he dragged himself to the edge of the raft, paused one minute, and to end his sufferings plunged into what he was determined to make his watery grave.

Down—down—down! He held his lips shut at first, but soon they were forced apart, and he felt the water gurgling in his throat. Then a wild struggle commenced in which he sought to save the life he had intended to throw away; struggled to save it, for the water that gurgled in his throat was—fresh!

It was a hard battle in his weakened condition, but he reached the raft at last, and clinging to it, gulped down great mouthfuls of the water about him. Dazed and confounded, he climbed upon the raft and gazed about him, and as his glance took in the distance, it rested on land and trees, and a wild, luxuriant vegetation that reached to the water's edge.

At length the prow of the raft touched the shore. He sprang out and hurried up the green slope, reached the level above with whirling head, and with a low moan sank beneath the shade of a large tree. Lying at full length, he closed his eyes.

He must have slept, for when he opened them again it was dark. He would have risen but that he heard a stir in the leaves above his head, as of something falling through them, and then that something struck the ground and rolled against his hand. It was an orange, the sense of smell told him. He could not help thinking how different it was now to some weeks before. Then he had been dying for want of food, now in prodigal confusion it fell into his very hand. Greedily he ate the orange, and then, ere he knew it, was asleep again.

A sudden cry, an angry growl, and Mr. Lane was wide awake. Starting up, his blood was frozen with terror at the sight of a panther just crouched for a spring. He tried to rise, and was on his knees, when again that hoarse, angry growl greeted him. The day was breaking, and he could see the animal plainly—could see the blood-red eyes, the drawn-back lips, the gleaming teeth, the tail moving sinuously to and fro. The panther's fierce aspect was terrifying, and Mr. Lane groaned at the thought of his helplessness and murmured to himself:

"Great heavens! have I passed through so much only to be reserved for this?"

Then a sharp rifle crack echoed and re-echoed through the woods, and the panther's dead body rolled at his very feet. He turned in mute surprise, and saw appear a strange figure. That his preserver was a white man he knew at a glance, but his clothing was but a strip of some animal's skin about his loins, a pair of leggings of the same material, and two flat pieces of wood tied to the soles of his feet were intended to answer as shoes.

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed the newcomer, the words coming out with an effort, as if he had not spoken in so long a time that the effort was a strange one, and the words unfamiliar.

"Amen!" said Mr. Lane, fervently.

Then the smile on the strange man's face faded; his brows knitted, and he said, gloomily:

"Perhaps it might have been better otherwise! You might have been spared a world of misery."

"Nay—nay!" cried Mr. Lane; "it is wicked to say such things—"

He was going to say more, when a thought of his attempt at self-destruction flashed upon him, and with face burning guiltily he said no more, but looked at his preserver with mingled curiosity and interest.

"Let me thank you," began Mr. Lane, but the other held up his hand as if to stop him.

The stranger sat down, resting the rifle in the hollow of his bare arm, and looked at Mr. Lane in turn with a pitying look.

"Where am I?" asked Mr. Lane.

"The stream beyond is the Amazon River."

Mr. Lane started, and a look of intelligence lighted his face. He could now understand how it came that he was in fresh water. He had entered the mouth of the mighty Amazon without knowing it, and had drifted up it miles and miles by aid of tide and wind, out of sight of land, as its banks are eighty miles apart at its mouth.

"And who are you?" asked Mr. Lane.

"Me?" was the sad reply. "I hardly know, 'tis so long since I have even asked myself my name. I remember like a dream that I used to be called Dave. Call me that; it will do as well as any other."

"Then you have been here a long time?" said Mr. Lane.

"Yes," he replied, with a weary air; "and in all that time yours is the first face I have seen."

## CHAPTER XV.

## LOU'S DISCOVERY.

When rumor reported Lou Lane as improving, it did not, as it does frequently, make a blunder, but told the truth. He had been as near death's door as a person could possibly be without entering its grim portals. And the doors were held open for many days by their keeper, so weak was Lou—held open in case of a relapse. But, thanks to kind nursing, to unwearied devotion, no relapse occurred, and after his wound had healed he began rapidly growing stronger.

Mrs. Lane had received Gertie Kingston and her mother with open arms when they sought refuge in her house when their own was swept away by the scorching breath of the fire-fiend, and here they remained, cheering Mrs. Lane up, and helping her during the few dreadful days succeeding Lou's return to consciousness at sound of the fire bell.

When the danger was over they spoke of going, but Mrs. Lane would not hear of it. So Gertie went back to her work, returning at night to the kindly shelter of Mrs. Lane's roof.

When he was strong enough to see others, his first visitor was his employer, the owner of the factory.

A grave, quiet man, not much given to words, but meaning to deal honestly and justly by everybody, as, indeed, he did, though his employees had not thought so when they went on the strike which led to the setting on fire of the factory.

Little by little, but surely and steadily, Lou gained in strength, and he began to look forward to going to work.

One evening Gertie suddenly entered the house, her cheeks flushed and bearing indignation.

"What is the matter?" asked Lou.

"I have not told you before on account of your sickness, but Mr. Dobbins has been worrying me lately. Every night he follows me here, and to-night he caught me in his arms and—and—k-k-kissed me," and here Gertie broke down with a sob.

"The scoundrel!" exclaimed Lou, and hurried outdoors; but Phil Dobbins being nowhere in sight, Lou was forced to return to the house.

He said nothing, but the next evening met Gertie as she issued from the factory gates and bore her company. Presently Phil Dobbins passed with a jaunty air, but wisely forebore angering Lou, who, in turn, controlled his desire to give the cowardly woman-insulter a thrashing on the spot.

Phil was nearly a block ahead, when another person passed the young couple—a lithe, tall man, with a certain air of courage and power about him; dressed in a dark suit, his face partially concealed by a broad-brimmed felt hat.

He was a stranger, and Lou could not help wondering who he was, and meeting him again, asked Billy Gray, who was with him at the time, if he knew.

"Not for sure," was the reply. "But I saw him once come out of the house of the president of the Carbondale Insurance Company, and I have a suspicion he may be a detective from the city."

They walked on for some time in silence, and then Billy suddenly put his hand in his pocket with an "oh!" as if he had just remembered something. It was a piece of paper—a torn portion of a sheet of note-paper—dirty and stained by the earth and weather. The writing in some places was altogether obliterated, at other places nearly so.

"What is it?" said Lou.

"I was berrying the other day, and coming home through the woods I found this bit of paper. I picked it up to catch a sight of a small lizard which ran under it, and was about to throw it away, when my eye chanced to catch the name of Phil Dobbins. Here, see if you can make anything out of it."

Lou took the dirty fragment of paper and scanned it long and earnestly; and he looked thoughtful and grave when he made out a word, or thought he did, to be—murder.

"Let me keep this, will you, Billy?" he said. "I have a magnifying-glass at home that I should like to put this under."

When Billy had gone Lou turned his footsteps toward the post-office, and while waiting until he could learn if there was any news for him he took out the bit of paper and scanned it more closely.

While thus engaged Phil Dobbins entered the office, and a scowl settled on his face at sight of Lou. Seeing the way Lou was occupied, Phil bent a searching glance at the soiled and stained paper, and then his face grew pale as death. He recognized it instantly. It was a part of the confession of Danks.

He reeled out of the office like a drunken man, and clutching a hitching-post outside to steady himself, tried to think.

"How are you, Lou? I was looking for you."

Lou glanced up to see his employer before him. Putting the paper away, he rose to his feet with a

"Thank you, sir; I'm myself again. I was going to report in the morning."

"Good! I'm glad to hear it! Then would you mind going on to-night? Just to take charge of the dressing-room," he added, explanatorily. "You will not have to work yourself, only oversee the others."

"Not a bit," replied Lou. "I'm glad to be of service in any way," he said, as they left the office together.

Phil overheard all that was said and thought he saw a chance to encompass Lou's death.

The factory was built against a hill, the upper level being flush with the windows of what was on the other side the third story. On this floor a flume entered the building that carried the water from the race to a large overshot wheel.

The dressing-room was on this floor, and Lou had not been long installed as overseer when a dark face was pressed for an instant against the glass. It was quickly withdrawn, and a smile of fiendish triumph lighted it up. It was Phil Dobbins.

He cautiously went over the ground behind him to acquaint himself with it for his flight, and then, near the midnight hour, he retraced his steps, peering once more inside, saw Lou sitting on a stool, drew his deadly weapon and took aim.

A grim, exultant smile was on his face, his finger was pressing the trigger. Another instant and Lou would have lain amid a frightened crowd of men and women.

The room was hot and close, and Lou had begun to feel the effects of the heat and closeness.

A door led out beside the flume. Opening this, he passed out into the night, but did not see the black shadow that slunk away in the darkness. Musing over the paper in his pocket, he walked on beside the flume until he reached the end, where the waters of the race went gurgling and churning into it.

Deep in thought, he watched the churning, foaming waters intently, and then—

A wild shriek reached the ears of those within the factory. And Lou was caught up and turned and twisted, and flung hither and thither, and then was rushed into the flume—rushed onward to death!

He had been pushed into the flume by Phil Dobbins.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## A RATTLE FOR LIFE.

With a cruel, triumphant laugh Phil Dobbins sped away like a rocket, and was safely out of sight ere the factory doors were flung open and the men in the dressing-room rushed out to learn the cause of the cry.

"It was Lou's voice and no mistake," said one. "Look around lively, boys, and find out what's become of him. You know somebody tried to kill him once. Maybe it's been tried again."

"Perhaps he tumbled into the race and was carried into the flume."

"Come," cried a voice, hoarse with emotion. "If he has, let's get him out as quick as possible," and the speaker started on a run for the factory. Eager, anxious, every one to render a service which in his own mind each thought useless.

And Lou?

When tossed and pitched around by the churning waters he had not lost his presence of mind, and when he felt himself being swept into the flume he struggled with all his might and main to stem it. Vain hope!

Yet he struggled to the last, and even when consciousness fled, and his bulging eyes were staring wildly, fixedly at nothing, his arms went flying hither and thither, and his hands clutched for something they could not find.

Then he became quiet, and the water carried him swiftly but smoothly along; embraced him in its chilling, life-destroying grasp, and hurried him on toward the great overshot wheel that kept turning over and over, with a strange, sobbing sound; carried him through the flume and into the great square tank whose gate regulated the supply of water received by the wheel.

Borne along by the current the body reached the gate, which being raised but several inches, the body could not pass under, and so remained wedged against the open space, held there by the weight of water behind.

And here it lay when the crowd of men came hurrying in and halted beside the overshot wheel.

Their leader was quick and intelligent, and the first thing he did was to fasten his eyes on the wheel, which throbbed and throbbed as it rolled around. He noticed one thing, it was turning far slower than it should.

"Boys!" he cried instantly, "I was right; he fell into the flume and his body is wedged under the gate this very instant, else the wheel would move quicker."

"Right!" cried one.

"Quick, for your lives!" cried the leader. "One of you shut off the water at the race-gate, and another hurry downstairs and stop the wheel."

There was a lever and a clutch by means of which the wheel could be stopped even when water was running, and a minute later the lever was grasped by a strong hand, and the clutch being moved, the heavy, ponderous wheel groaned, the timbers squeaked, then it stood motionless, and the water that overflowed the buckets went splashing down into the sluice-way below.

"Up on the tank!" cried the leader, and two men almost flew to obey the order. Quickly fastening a rope about his waist, the leader threw them the end to prevent his being carried away, and then climbed out on the wheel. Bracing himself just opposite the spot where the sheet of water was broken as it issued from beneath the gate, he cried:

"Steady, then! Now raise her a little!"

An eager clutch, and the cold, still body was in the arms of the brave man; and he hung to it, though the rush of water carried him off his feet, and bounced and bruised and battered him against the buckets.

The gate was down, the water ceased flowing, and steadied by the rope, the brave fellow carried his limp, dripping burden from off the wheel and stretched it on the floor of the dressing-room, which Lou had been in such a short time before.

"Run for a doctor, somebody!"

Half a dozen willing pairs of feet rushed to perform the mission, and soon three physicians were beside the body, gazing into the pale face, feeling of the cold hands.

There was no need in wasting much time in discussion, for the doctors soon agreed on one point—he was not dead!

With proper treatment he could be saved.

And save him they did. In less than two hours' time he was able to stand on his feet with assistance, and in another he was strong enough to stand alone, and when his work was done he walked home, not alone, for the men would not hear of that, but borne company by a number of them, who, when they parted with him at his gate, gave him three cheers. They had refused to let him go home alone, because when asked a few minutes after his return to consciousness if he had accidentally fallen into the flume, he had replied:

"No—no, I was pushed—"

But there he had halted and become reticent concerning his narrow escape.

In the afternoon his employer dropped in to see him, and uttered many kind words, sympathized with his misfortune and renewed his promise of keeping his place ready against his coming back.

Another visitor he had that day was honest, brave-hearted Billy Gray, whose face burned indignantly at thoughts of the cowardly assaults on the brave young foreman of No. 6.

One piece of information which Billy imparted brought a smile to Lou's lips, and that night he said to Gertie when they chanced to be alone:

"So a certain young lady had to faint away when she heard of the accident!"

Her cheeks flushed scarlet and she hung her head.

"I think it's mean to try and tease me," she said.

"I don't want to tease you, and I won't," replied Lou. "So there!"

"And, Lou," she faltered, "they say it was not an accident. Is it true?"

"Yes," he said, "but I do not wish it generally known yet."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### DAVE'S STORY.

With the rifle resting in the hollow of his naked arm, Dave, as he had bade Mr. Lane call him, gazed at the castaway, then let his head rest in his hand a minute or two, as if collecting his thoughts, then raised it again.

"Now, you shall hear my story, though it may cause you, as I fear, to curse instead of bless the hand that saved your life."

"It is this: Not so many years ago, though heaven knows it seems a century to me, I was a prosperous and wealthy man. I had a good start in life with the money left me by an only relative. I had long loved a girl whom I at once made my wife, and we were blessed with a child that I only re-

member as learning to prattle. Ah! many and many a time do I fancy I hear the first word her tongue was ever taught to utter—'papa.'

"But to go on. I became acquainted with a man who seemed to be rich and making money rapidly. He was a contractor for railroad supplies, which he shipped to South America.

"Taken in and deluded by the tales he told me, I sold out the business I then had and joined him.

"There was a railroad to be built here of some importance. He put in a contract for certain supplies and work at a ruinously low figure.

"Our bid was accepted.

"We shipped a cargo of supplies, and then, at his suggestion, we both left our homes and came here, I giving a solemn promise to my wife to return inside of six months—ah! how many times six months have elapsed since that fatal day.

"I will not burden you with telling you how, little by little, suspicious actions of his coming to my notice forced upon me the conviction that I had fallen into the hands of a rascal.

"He had transacted all the business and drew all the money, though, according to his account, the company never made him any payments, and I, who had charge of the laborers was compelled to put them off with excuses from day to day.

"One day I went to the managers of the enterprise and asked for money, and was informed that a day or two before my partner had been paid a large sum.

He had taken it and fled.

"Stunned by the intelligence, I wandered around like a crazy man, until, thoroughly exhausted, I flung myself on the bed in my hut and wept—aye, wept like a child.

"I had a native for a servant.

"He approached me and told me that the camp was alive, that the men were fighting among themselves. I arose to go to them, but they came to me, and I learned that the company had failed that day; that they knew of my partner's having received some money; that they knew he had fled, and that they considered me in league with him.

"They procured a rope, and when I saw them coming toward my hut, howling and screaming, I jumped through an opening in the back and fled; plunged into the woods, accompanied by my faithful servant, and plunged deeper and deeper into the wilderness in search of safety.

"But they hunted me like a wild beast, and never gave up the chase until long after I had fallen a prisoner into the hands of the savages in the interior.

"I carried a rifle with me when I fled—this very rifle you see now—and when I and my servant were made prisoners, curiosity was sufficient for them to retain it and carry it with them.

"I was sold and passed into the possession of another tribe, who offered a fabulous sum for me. My white skin was making me an object of curiosity.

"Time passed on—years must have expired in this kind of life—when I was sold to a tribe inhabiting the region about a hundred miles south from here. They were careless with my rifle, and I saw where it was kept. The sight roused in me a desire to escape.

"Selecting a dark night, I stole rifle, powder and bullets, but was detected ere I could get away; and a yelling horde, rushing from all quarters, hemmed me in.

"Then, for the first time, they learned the use of the object of so much curiosity.

"I feared the rifle would not shoot—that the charge was old and worthless—but when my trembling finger pulled the trigger there was a short report and one fellow fell dead.

"The belching of fire from the muzzle frightened them, and they fell back aghast.

"In due course of time I reached the 'Great River.'

"Since then I have roamed these wilds alone, living somehow, I scarcely know how myself, for I have no means of procuring food; a knife would be a boon to me, indeed. These pieces of wood on my feet were shaped with a sharp-edged stone; this skin about my waist was cut out by the same means."

Mr. Lane had listened to this story with bowed head and bleeding heart.

Much more passed that need not be recorded here, and which we will not repeat. But the expiration of two days found Dave a changed man, for Mr. Lane's hopeful manner became infused in him, and his spirits rose when Mr. Lane

showed him a brace of seven-shot revolvers and gave him one.

"Surely," said Mr. Lane, after relating his own story, "I ought not to give up after having passed through so much."

"No!" cried Dave, "and neither will I. We will go back to our homes!"

A week later they commenced that return.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

DOBBINS & SON.

The firm of Dobbins & Son was not prospering as well as it had done when known as Lane & Dobbins. Mr. Lane had established the business, and was favorably and widely known, and credits could be procured on his personal word, which Dobbins found it hard to do, for somehow people distrusted the smooth, oily-tongued, plausible man.

Dobbins, Sr., began to ponder over some means of remedying this, and one view he took of the matter will be shown further on.

Just before closing time one afternoon he called Phil into his private office, and with a stern air and tone asked:

"What do you know about the attempt on young Lane's life?"

"Nothing," was the reply. "Why, he says himself it was an accident."

Mr. Dobbins looked sharply at him, and Phil knew that he was not believed.

"See here, Phil," said his father, "you have been acting strangely of late, and I should like to know what is up; but if you won't tell me, at least answer me this: Is there a penalty of any kind hanging over your head—say for some little misstep of yours?"

Phil was silent, and his eyes sought the floor.

"Is it hanging?" said Mr. Dobbins, in a clear, low voice, and Phil nodded a dumb assent, but kept his eyes on the floor, knowing that his father's keen gaze was fastened upon him.

Thus they sat quietly for some time, and then they arose and prepared to go home together. Passing from the store, with a few words to the porter relative to closing up, they were walking quietly up the street, when of a sudden Mr. Dobbins clutched Phil's arm tightly, and Phil could plainly feel him trembling.

"Who is that, Phil—do you know?" asked Mr. Dobbins, indicating a lady approaching, and who was looking at him in a fixed manner.

"Yes," said Phil. "It is a woman by the name of Mrs. Kingston, and she has a daughter who works in the factory here."

"Strange that I have never seen her before," old Dobbins said, more to himself than to Phil.

"Not very strange, either, for they say she has been something of an invalid, and never has gone out much—at least not until she was burned out, and went to stay at the Lanes."

"At the Lanes?" echoed Mr. Dobbins.

"Yes."

"This must be looked after," he muttered, breathing hard.

"What's up now, I wonder?" thought Phil, but refrained from asking what he knew would be a useless question.

Mr. Dobbins sat in his room that night and thought long and deeply, and then, summoning Phil, he said:

"Phil, I have reached a decision."

"About what?"

"About the state of affairs," said his father, evasively. "And I want to know, in the first place, whether you will follow my instructions."

"Tell me what they are."

"In the first place, we must arrange matters as speedily as possible, and give Carbondale a wide berth. If you do, as I wish, we cast our fortunes together, and go to some place to share our gain. If not—you know the rest."

"I accept," said Phil, humbly. "Do as you say."

And then he crawled off to bed and there lay wondering what the end of all this would be. He might have gained some clue to the end could his sight have penetrated the walls of Lou Lane's room, and seen him poring over that bit of paper, now scrutinizing it close at hand, now at a distance, and again through a microscope.

But he was forced to give it up at last and go to bed. But he was at it again long before the rest of the household was astir the next morning. He was impatient at call to breakfast, but went down and ate it in a mechanical way, only half conscious of Mrs. Kingston's story of an encounter with a face she had known long—long ago.

Then he went back to paper and microscope, and puzzled and worked all day long.

At nightfall he thought he had made a discovery.

At a spot where the ink was badly blurred, and where he had carefully removed a heavy stain of earthy matter, he found some lines which could not be writing. Carefully studying them, he decided that it was intended for a rude sketch of three trees, growing close together. In this he was confirmed by shortly finding near the base of these trees the word "oaks."

"Three oaks!" he mused. "What meaning can be attached to that? Perhaps it's some rendezvous. If it is might I not find some trace, some clue in their vicinity? And the oaks, where are they?"

Long and deeply he pondered, and the next morning, accompanied by Billy Gray, he started for the woods in search of three oaks growing close together.

Their search had been fruitless up to noon, when a thought of Zachary Kemp struck Lou. Might he not be able to help them find those three trees, as he was well acquainted with the woods?

He imparted his idea to Billy, and they started for the rude habitation of Zachary Kemp, in the door of which at that time, weak and pale, sat Phil Dobbins' victim, Gargler Danks, his hand resting on the wound made by the hand of Phil Dobbins, whom he was cursing in his heart, and vowed vengeance against and plotting the means to obtain it.

### CHAPTER XIX.

THE SEARCH.

Zachary Kemp proved to be a faithful and untiring nurse, and it was due to his ministration that Danks did not die within an hour after receiving that wound.

So the turning point that decided whether Danks was to live or die was passed in safety, and then he began to recover his strength so slowly that it augured bad for the future, seeming to indicate that he would never fully recover from the effects of that blow.

Dank's one engrossing theme was his hatred of Phil Dobbins and his desire for revenge.

"As soon as I get strong enough—then—then—ha, ha!—Phil Dobbins, look out!"

And Zachary Kemp, who hardly ever went out of sight of his guest, would watch him closely and wonder what made him so excited.

A change had come over Zachary. His face was more grave and quiet. His former nervous, jerky way of moving had been softened down. His monomania on the subject of avenging himself on the Carbondale Insurance Company by setting fire to the property they insured began to grow less intense.

Danks started in alarm when he saw suddenly appear before the hut Lou Lane and Billy Gray; his face paled with fear, and when he saw that they had recognized him he would have fled had he been possessed of sufficient strength.

The young men were both surprised beyond expression, and looked blankly at Danks, until Zachary hurried from the interior of the hut, crying:

"Oh! ho! it's only you, is it, Lou? Don't be afraid, old fellow," he said, patting Danks on the shoulder. "He will not betray you. Come nearer, Lou, my boy."

Lou stepped forward and shook Zachary by the hand, while his eyes rested pityingly on the picture of physical misery which Danks presented. With a shudder Lou could not help thinking, "Even if he was the firebug, he has been punished enough," and so when Zachary requested it he readily promised not to mention having seen Danks, which promise Billy Gray also gave.

Danks bent an earnest look on Lou's face and watched his eyes eagerly when they were turned toward him, and he gave a sigh of relief when he found Lou's gaze to be open, frank and unsuspicious. He would not raise a finger against Lou now if he could have done so, for there flitted across his mind the idea that Lou might go hand-in-hand with him in dragging Phil Dobbins to justice.

He had it on his lips to say something, when Lou asked Zachary to step aside with him.

"Three oaks growing together?" said Zachary, thoughtfully, when Lou had asked the question; and then he suddenly asked: "Why do you wish to find three such trees?"

"I hardly know myself," was Lou's honest reply. "But do you know any trees of that description?"

"Yes," said Zachary, slowly, and then bending his keen

eyes on Lou's face, he asked: "Has this search for the three trees anything to do with young Dobbins?"

"It has."

"The knife I gave you to return to him was found beneath those very trees. Yes; I know the spot. Do you remember the little brook where the water-cresses grow?"

"Yes."

"And the spring where it commences?"

"Yes."

"The three oaks are about a hundred feet to the east of it."

"I can find it, then," said Lou. "Much obliged, I'm sure. Mr. Kemp, and anything I can do to repay you you may depend on my doing."

"Then," said Zachary, "I have a favor to ask. Should you find anything, let me know before you arrest Dobbins."

With that Zachary left them and entered the hut, and Phil and Billy started for the three oaks.

They found them where Zachary had said. It was a little green-carpeted glade in which they stood, with no other trees within a dozen feet, and halting beneath them with a sigh the young men glanced around with a questioning, eager look—a look of expectancy, though neither knew what it was they wished to see, and only knew it was something.

"We must look around," at last said Lou: "It doesn't look as if we should find anything by standing still."

For nearly half an hour they had been thus employed, when a sharp cry from Billy caused Lou to hasten to his side.

"What is it?" he hastily inquired.

"There! At that stone! It is all dark with hairs clinging to it."

Lou stooped and picked up the rock with which Phil Dobbins had dealt a death-blow to his dissolute companion, the pal of the villain Danks—stooped and picked up the rock with a cry of surprise.

Lou dropped the rock with a shudder, for it told of some dark tale, and, turning toward Billy, he gasped:

"This is horrible!"

"Aye, that it is," said Billy, in a low voice. "Is it possible, Lou, that Phil could have committed a murder?"

"Heaven forgive me if I suspect him unjustly, but I believe that is the truth," answered Lou.

"Then," said Billy, "the body must be concealed somewhere near."

"Yes."

They saw a place where it seemed that the earth had been disturbed.

With a couple of sticks they began digging a little hole, which became rapidly deeper for a while, and then their sticks refused to go further. But they flung out the dirt, and at last the object beneath was uncovered, and they looked down upon a human face.

Billy glanced askance at Lou, who thoughtfully said:

"We will cover it up, Billy, and leave it as we found it for the present. And I must decipher the rest of the paper."

"Very well," was the reply, and they covered the face up, arranged the earth again, and then went slowly homeward.

Phil Dobbins was in their minds, and neither could repress a start when they passed him in the street, and they could see his face pale slightly beneath their sharp scrutiny. A few steps further onward another person passed them, the person Billy had informed Lou he thought to be a detective.

"Can he be on Phil's track?" thought Lou.

## CHAPTER XX.

### ON THE WAY HOME.

The gloomy look of brooding disappeared from Dave's face when Mr. Lane talked hopefully of making their way home, and when once started he worked with a desperate hopefulness that was painful to witness.

"Heaven grant he may not meet with disappointment," thought Mr. Lane. "It would kill him if our plans were to fail."

Briefly stated, Mr. Lane's plan was this: To make a sail for the raft of matting made from the fiber of a species of wood which Dave had learned to weave when a captive; to make a pair of oars, and then by the aid of manual labor to proceed on up the river as far as they could go. By this means he felt sure they could arrive within a hundred miles or so of civilization. This distance they could traverse in a week if they were fortunate enough not to be molested by the natives; but if they were they had the means of defending themselves.

So they made the oars and sail and began their ascent of

the river, the current of which soon began to grow stronger the farther they went.

They now began to assist their progress by using the oars Mr. Lane had made with his knife; but even these failed to be of use at the expiration of several days more, for the water was now beginning to fall rapidly, and with sail and oars they could no longer make head against it.

They went on shore here and fastened the raft to the bank.

Here they remained for two days, taking a good rest preparatory to the struggle before them of passing through the wilderness.

And then they started, but not until Mr. Lane had visited the raft and looked lingeringly if not lovingly at it, for it seemed to him like an old friend.

The first day was spent in traversing an open piece of woods, and their progress was so good that their hearts were light and happy, and they laid down to rest with thankful prayers on their lips.

After a breakfast of fruits the next morning they started on again.

At the expiration of two weeks they judged that half their journey was accomplished—that journey which they thought might be made in a week.

Heaven only knows what they suffered during this time when for several days they were lost in the swamps and dying of thirst. They would throw themselves flat in the black mud before some hole filled with liquid mud and suck it in with closed teeth, to prevent swallowing lizards and wriggling worms, with which it abounded. They suffered from hunger, too, and one day a venomous snake, which struck ineffectually at Mr. Lane, afforded them a meal.

They went forward again, now keeping their revolvers in readiness, for they might at any time come across the natives.

Arriving at the foot of some mountains, they halted until they could lay in a stock of provisions, and then commenced the laborious ascent. The top was gained, and they hurried onward, leaving behind the barren rocks and black plateaus, where no tree or shrub ever grew—left the intensely cold atmosphere in which they had nearly perished, and pushed on down the mountains to warmer climes.

Several times they came across parties of the natives, but each time luckily escaped unseen.

Toiling on hopefully, they came upon an outpost of civilization—a little hut buried in the woods, with a cultivated field near by. Here Dave procured a sort of blouse, which he put on, and then they hastened forward, and when they were about ready to sink with fatigue they came upon a little village. Here they stayed three days, and then went speedily forward with a guide, themselves mounted on donkeys. Three days' steady riding brought them to a little seaport, from which a vessel carried them a hundred miles up the coast to a large one, where they found a vessel nearly ready to sail.

Two days later they were out of sight of land.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### DANKS AND PHIL MEET.

Lou was destined soon to know whether the man whom he and Billy supposed to be a detective was on Phil's track.

Several days later, in the early evening, the stranger knocked at the door and inquired if he could see Lou Lane.

When Phil was summoned by his mother and went to the door he recognized the stranger as the man Billy told him he thought was a detective. So Phil, after the man introduced himself, accused him of being a detective.

"And how did you find out?"

"Well, we saw you following Phil, or supposed that you were, and then Billy saw you coming out of the insurance company's president's house. Two and two make four, of course."

"Humph! Well, you're right. As you say, two and two make four; now did you mean by that that you supposed I was shadowing young Dobbins, thinking it probable that he was the incendiary who has destroyed so much property?"

"I never asked myself the question," answered Lou. "I did not try very hard to imagine why you followed Phil, although I certainly never gave him credit with starting these fires."

"You and Phil are not good friends."

"Not the best," replied Lou; "but come straight to business. What do you want of me?"

"I thought we might be able to help each other some. I believe him to be the fire-bug. In the first place, I have learned that when the factory took fire his engine would not work, though at a public parade and trial a few days before she had been in splendid order. That was the first to rouse my sus-

pitions. Next I learned that he was in the habit of associating with a man whom I know to be an escaped convict, the same one who was caught in the jeweler's building while it was burning, and who came near being lynched.

"He escaped and has not been seen since, and there have been no fires lately. Now I am satisfied that he and Dobbins worked together, and ever since then I have been dogging Phil's steps."

"I saw him one night stealing toward the factory, followed him, and saw some one pushed into the flume."

"That was me!" cried Lou. "I suspected him of it."

"Well, with your assistance, we might land the culprit."

"And how can I assist you?"

"By assisting in the search for his accomplice—Danks, he called himself. Once get hold of him and I can force a confession from him of this whole rascally business."

"I know where he is now."

"What!" cried the detective, sharply. "Where is he?" was the eager question that followed.

Lou was silent; he had given Zachary Kemp his word that he would do nothing that would place Danks' life in danger; so he replied:

"The knowledge came in a peculiar way, and I am not at liberty to tell."

"What do you mean?" cried his visitor. "Where is he, quick—he may escape!"

"He will not," said Lou. "He has been sick and is very weak. Give me time—two days—and I will lead you where he is."

"Very well; so be it. I little dreamed of such good results when I came here. Good-night," he said. "Two nights hence—don't forget."

"No."

At that very hour Phil was in his father's room, and they were talking earnestly and low.

"The game is about up, Phil, and we must go as soon as possible, before I am fully recognized by this Mrs. Kingston. I would sell out the business if I could, but it cannot be done without exciting suspicion, so out of many plans I have selected this—burning up the store and stock, and skipping out the minute we get the money from the insurance company. I favor this strongly, because at the present time our stock is low and is insured for double its value, although the whole amount would not cover what we have carried in stock in times past. Your share in the transaction will be to start the fire."

"Why don't you start the fire yourself?" grumbled Phil, though his defiant manner vanished, and in its stead came a dogged submission.

"Because I wish you to do it."

"And how am I to get away without being seen, after the fire is lighted?" asked Phil, with lowering face.

"Easy enough, as you would know if you had paid attention to what I told you. There will be a slow match to light, so the fire will not break out until you are blocks away from the place."

"And if I don't get away?"

"Why, then, you'll be caught," said his father, with grim earnestness. "Don't spoil everything by sullen obstinacy. It seems to be rampant in you to-night; perhaps you had better go to bed and try and sleep it off."

With some unintelligible reply Phil left the room and went to his own, where he steeped himself in liquor, and went to bed.

It was not until the afternoon of the next day that he deigned to appear, and his father saw that he was under the influence of liquor; but Mr. Dobbins did not attempt to reprove him, for he knew that the sullen fires slumbering in Phil's eyes a word might fan into fierce and angry flames, and, besides, Mr. Dobbins knew that under the influence of the liquor Phil would be reckless enough to carry out his plans to the letter, when, if sober, he might be too cowardly to do otherwise than make a failure.

He left the house and strolled along toward the factory, thinking of Gertie Kingston, discovering whom at the window, he threw a kiss and a disgusting leer, and then passed on until he was near the woods.

"I must see if Danks is where I left him. He'd ought to have been buried long ago, for there's no telling who might find the body."

Floundering along through the woods, he drew near the three oaks. Then, stopping and gazing around, he advanced a few steps and then fixed his blood-shot eyes on a spot just before him.

"There's where I— He ain't there. Where can he be?" he said aloud.

"Here!" cried a hoarse voice, and as Phil turned he saw Danks come flying toward him with upraised hand clutching a knife; though stupefied with liquor, Phil could not mistake that face and figure, and he gasped for breath and quickly staggered aside in time to avoid the vicious blow aimed at him.

Danks fell, and in endeavoring to save himself spread open his hands, and the knife flew some distance away. Without waiting to pick it up when he scrambled to his feet he flew furiously at Phil and caught him by the throat.

Wild and fierce was the fight that followed. Danks was weakened by his wound, Phil by his intoxication, so the struggle was an even one.

It came to an end when Danks seized an advantage that offered to throw Phil heavily to the ground; he strained hard to accomplish it, and was on the point of success when he suddenly uttered a shriek of agony, let go his hold, flung up his arms, and fell headlong to the earth.

The strain had broken open his wound afresh, and naught on earth could save him.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### LOU AND THE DETECTIVE.

Phil Dobbins staggered back when Danks so suddenly let go of him, and nearly fell recovering his equilibrium with an effort, he darted forward gasping for breath, and not yet guessing the truth, was about to fling himself upon the prostrate man.

Then he saw the face from which the color was slowly departing, giving place to a ghastly, corpse-like hue.

Not yet satisfied, Phil knelt beside the body for a minute.

"Dead as a hammer this time," he said, grimly exultant, as he arose to his feet; "but where have you been all this time? Have you given me away?" and a pallor overspread his face at the reflection.

"It ought to be buried," he mused, and then muttered with a shudder, "but I'll never come back to this spot to do it—never! No, I'll leave it as it is, and let it be found by some chance passer. I'll fire the store, and light out of Carbondale to-morrow, and wait for the old man at some point."

Finishing his soliloquy, he cast another look at the body, and glided away through the bushes, and leaving the woods, made his way home, where he applied himself again to the bottle, and soon was in a state bordering on intoxication.

But in the meantime let us return to the woods where the body was lying, and keep our mental eyes on that while we follow the movements of Lou Lane and the detective.

At their meeting Lou had promised to conduct the detective to the hiding-place of Gargler Danks two days later. The day following the giving of the promise he went to Zachary Kemp and told him what he was going to do, for he would not break his word with the old man without giving him proper warning.

Zachary immediately told Danks that it would not be safe for him to remain longer in the hut, as the officers of the law had got on his track.

So Danks left the hut and started for the next town. In passing the three oaks he met Phil Dobbins, with the result as detailed above.

On hand at sundown, the hour appointed, the detective and Lou started away, and after a brisk walk reached Zachary's hut, to find the bird flown, which was what Lou had expected.

Having an idea that this would be the case, he had studied up Danks' most probable action, which his judgment proved to be correct in, so, with the detective at his heels, he followed the precise course that Danks had taken.

A faint haze began to fill the air, telling of coming night, as they approached the oaks, and Lou but indistinctly saw the dark object that lay stretched across their path, and failed to guess its character until right beside it.

With a startled movement he cried:

"It's the man we're looking for."

"What!" exclaimed the detective, "is it Danks?"

"Yes."

The detective stooped beside the body and laid his cheek close to the slightly parted lips.

It was several minutes before he could decide whether he was a victim to a lively imagination or whether he could actually feel a faint breath touch his cheek.

"If we had some liquor," suggested Lou, "we might try to revive him."

"Liquor! Yes; I always go provided with a small flask of cognac. I'll give him a little."

Forcing open Danks' lips, the detective allowed perhaps a good tablespoonful of the brandy to run down his throat.

At the end of two or three minutes he repeated the dose, and then again laid his cheek close to the rigid lips.

"He lives!"

Soon a feeble moan broke the silence, and Danks uneasily moved with unconscious pain.

"He'll come to, I think, now," said the detective, hopefully.

His reasoning was good, for in a few minutes Danks opened his eyes slowly, with a tired look, as if it were an exertion to raise his drooping lids:

"Who are you?" the detective heard him faintly whisper, and then signed Lou to reply.

"Lou Lane."

"How came you here?"

"We were looking for you."

"What for?" was the question they guessed he had asked, for they could hear no sound issue from his lips.

Lou was about to reply when he saw the eyelids fall and heard a faint sigh.

"He's going!" he exclaimed.

Quick as a flash the detective had the brandy flask at Danks' lips, and let nearly half the quantity remaining gurgle into the dying man's mouth and trickle down his throat.

It revived him at once, and Lou could see that Danks turned his eyes on him.

"We want to know something about Phil Dobbins," said Lou. "Can you tell us anything?"

"He was here a minute ago," said Danks, who was under the impression that his unconsciousness had been only momentary.

"Here!" repeated Lou.

"Yes. He gave me this wound."

And then, being led on by Lou, Danks went on to relate the history of the death of the man whose body Lou and Billy Gray had found, told of the compact that had followed between him and Phil Dobbins; told how the return of Phil's pocket-knife had been taken by them as a threat or a dark hint that Lou knew their secret; how he had fired the shot and left him by the roadside for dead; and then raising his hand toward heaven, he said:

"I swear that I know nothing of the fire on the night when I was chased. I went there to rob the premises, and the fire broke out while I was there."

"Could Phil Dobbins have started it?"

"No," was the reply, and then he related the story of his first and second meeting with Phil Dobbins, when he had been so treacherously stabbed, and of the loss of the confession he had written, which was stolen by the would-be assassin.

A few words more brought his story down to himself lying there with his life slowly ebbing away.

The detective had been busy jotting down the main points of Danks' story on a blank piece of note paper.

Placing the pencil in Danks' hand, he asked him to sign it.

This he did as well as he could with his trembling hand and in the gathering darkness, after which the detective and Lou both added their names.

There came a long-drawn sigh—the head that Lou held grew heavier.

The wicked man was before his Maker!

### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### PREPARING FOR FLIGHT.

The elder Dobbins was sitting in his room at just the hour when Danks was breathing his last—was sitting there musing over his affairs when the bell rang, and a lady inquired for Mr. Dobbins.

With many misgivings at heart Dobbins descended to the parlor, and found there Mrs. Kingston, whom he saluted with a cold, formal bow and an askance look.

"Mr. Dobbins, I believe?" said Mrs. Kingston, returning his bow.

"Yes."

"Formerly of New York?"

"You are quite mistaken, madam," was the chilling reply. "Then you deny ever being in business in New York?"

"I do."

"With my husband?"

"I do."

"I do not believe you," she said, low, but firm.

"What of that?" he demanded, grimly, but with a slight feeling of uneasiness barely perceptible in face and manner.

"What of that?" she repeated. "This—that you can tell of my husband; where is he?"

"Madam, let me repeat that I never saw your husband, left him at no time and no place, and not having the pleasure of your acquaintance, I would beg of you to make this visit as short as you conveniently can."

"So I will," she proudly said, as she haughtily rose, "though not to let the matter rest here, sir, but to return with those who will make you answer."

Mr. Dobbins held the door open for her with mocking politeness and a smiling face. When the door was closed its smile was transplanted by a scowl, and he hissed:

"The fiends seize the luck! Why could she not delay this visit a few days? The lines are closing in around me; I must be off as soon as possible."

He went back to his room and settled himself in an easy-chair.

The room felt close and hot, and he flung up the window.

But this only afforded a temporary relief, and an hour later he sought the open piazza, and later on he left that and began briskly walking up the street.

He paid little attention to the course he took, and evinced no surprise when he found himself in the vicinity of the railroad depot, at whose door he had just arrived when the night express came thundering along.

He had passed on a few steps when he turned to look at the passengers coming through the depot door, above which flared a gas-jet inclosed with glass.

He saw two men emerge through the door, and as he glanced at them a second time with startled look, his face grew deathly pale, and, staggering back, he would have fallen had he not clutched a railing for support.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "The game is up! I must fly at once. I have just time to go home and warn Phil, get the money, and reach here in time to get the down train to New York."

Like a drunken man he reeled on toward home, and rushed into the house, up the stairs, and into Phil's room, crying:

"Phil—Phil! You need not start that fire—we must fly this very night!" when, glancing around the room, he saw that it was empty; that Phil had already departed on his mission.

He then hurried to his own room, and taking from a safe all the money he had gathered in preparing for his ultimate flight from Carbondale, he secured it about his person, looked at his watch, found he had nearly half an hour to spare, and flung himself into a chair to await Phil's return.

What was keeping Phil? Surely it was time he returned!

Mr. Dobbins fretted and fumed, and commenced restlessly pacing the floor.

Fear had now taken possession of him, and he imagined all sorts of things had happened to his villainous son.

Then he thought of Lou Lane, and wondered what he was doing.

He feared the young fellow more than any one else, for Phil had informed him that Lou had given him reason to fear that he knew the worst.

What was Lou doing at that hour? The reader perhaps asks this question.

When they knew beyond doubt that Danks was dead, Lou laid down his head and arose to his feet.

After a short consultation with the detective, they carried the body by laborious efforts to the hut of Zachary Kemp, in whose charge they left it, while they returned to the town.

On the way there they canvassed the situation, and it was decided that the detective should arrest Phil that very night.

When they reached Lou's house the detective accepted his invitation to take supper with him, it being yet comparatively early in the night.

Mrs. Lane waited on them herself, and while so doing informed Lou of Mrs. Kingston's visit to Mr. Dobbins, and its result.

Like a dream Lou remembered Mrs. Kingston having spoken one day of having met Mr. Dobbins in the street. He looked at the detective, as much as to ask what he thought of it.

"I should have him arrested," said the detective. "I think we can make out a case against him."

No other word was spoken until Lou finished his supper, during the eating of which he had remained in profound thought.

"I think you are right," he said, as he pushed away from the table. "I will go to the justice of the peace and swear out a warrant while you go after Phil."

"Well planned," rejoined the detective, putting on his hat.

Lou found the magistrate at his house, and preferred the request for a warrant for Mr. Dobbins, at mention of whose name the justice was aghast.

"Have you thought how serious a matter it is to arrest a man of Mr. Dobbins' standing without positive proof?"

"I have," said Lou. "Give me the warrant. I will shoulder all the responsibility."

With the warrant in his possession Lou hurried away and found a constable to execute it.

They reached Mr. Dobbins' house, and, having passed the gate, were crossing the yard when they heard the squeaking of a door and saw a figure stealthily emerge. It was Mr. Dobbins, carpet-bag in hand.

Mr. Dobbins was near the gate, when the constable stepped out from the shade of a clump of rose bushes, laid a hand on his shoulder and declared him a prisoner.

So sudden and unexpected was it that Mr. Dobbins was momentarily thunderstruck, and then recovering the use of his wits, he snatched out a revolver, and would have used it but for a thwack on the head that felled him to the ground, and ere he could rise the handcuffs were on his wrists.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE FIRE.

Phil Dobbins kept the bottle at his lips from the time of his return from the woods until the hour arrived for the execution of his father's incendiary project.

Steadying himself on his feet, he put on his coat and hat and then descended the stairs, passed out of doors and up the street, muttering and chuckling to himself.

He was far too intoxicated to notice that he had passed an individual who stared at sight of him, or to know that he was being followed.

Yet such was the case.

The detective would have arrested him at once but for the mutterings and chucklings he heard, which decided him to let Phil go for the present, although he meant to keep him under his thumb.

Phil reached the store, and as he passed it paused for an instant to threaten it quietly with his fist. Going as far as the corner, he looked up and down the street, and then retracing his steps entered a little court or alley that led to the back of the store.

Here there was an iron door that swung outward, to which Phil had the key.

Unlocking this with a great show of drunken caution, his every movement closely observed by the detective, Phil drew open the door, turned the knob of the inner one, and stepped inside of the store.

Hither the detective dared not follow for fear of alarming him, so he halted beside the door and watched and listened.

At three separate points beneath the counters Phil piled up large quantities of combustible material, and then inserted the slow match.

All that now remained to be done was to light these.

Phil's hand was so unsteady that he failed to get the slow match lighted until he had exhausted about half a dozen matches.

Lighted at last, he staggered to the second, and after about the same amount of trouble, succeeded in getting it to burn.

He made his way unsteadily to the third, which he lighted more easily than he had either of the others, after accomplishing which he stood gazing at it, and repeating:

"You're started at last, ain't you? You're started at last, ain't you? Yes, you are; now burn away—burn away, like a good fellow, and I'll leave you."

He reeled across the floor toward the door, and passed the first lighted match as a puff of smoke announced the ignition of the material into which it had been placed.

"Bully boy!" he exclaimed, thickly. "You'll do the business—what's that?"

The last two words were drawn forth by a clanging sound, as if the iron door had closed.

So it had.

The detective had begun curiously examining the lock, during which he knocked out the key, which fell to the ground; stooping to search for it, he struck his shoulder against the door, which caused it to close with a loud clang.

Accompanying this was a snapping sound as of a lock-bolt springing into its place.

"It's a spring-lock," thought the detective, as he searched for the key on the ground as well as on the dilapidated brick pavement, and then hearing heavy footsteps advancing he glided away, supposing of course that it could be opened on the inside without the aid of a key.

In this he was mistaken, for the heavy tread halted at the

door, a body was flung against it, and then a loud cry of misery and fear reached the detective's ears.

Phil knew he could not open the door without a key, but was too stupefied to understand his danger until after he had flung himself against the door, in doing which he caught a glimpse of the rapidly increasing flames.

Then it was that he uttered that cry, for like a thunderbolt the thought rushed upon him:

"I shall be roasted alive, for I can't get out."

He paused in the middle of the store an instant, braced and nerved himself up to his full strength, then madly rushed at the unyielding iron door, only to be flung back on the floor bruised and bleeding.

The fire roared and the black smoke rolled in clouds along the ceiling and came curling down the sides of the store, strangling and blinding Phil, who tore his hair and fiercely dashed to and fro, like a caged tiger.

"Fire—Fire!" he frenziedly yelled, as he rushed to and fro.

The detective, still searching for the key—for he was mystified by the strange sounds within—heard the echo of Phil's cry, and then rushing into the street, he raised the alarm with might and main.

Then the bell tolled out its warning notes, and the air was filled with shouts, rushing of feet, slamming of windows, grinding of wheels, and the confusion of bedlam itself.

Half-way to the jail the constable and his prisoner and Lou heard the alarm.

"Take care of him!" cried Lou to the constable, and was away like a flash.

By the time that he got the doors of the H. and L. house open several of his company had arrived. Seizing the trumpet, he sprang to the front with the old cry:

"Man the ropes!"

Away they rushed, going the faster at the inspiring cry:

"We're out the first! No. 6 is always ahead!"

The flames were bursting through the front of the store when H. and L. No. 6 arrived on the scene.

"He's in there!" cried a voice in Lou's ear, as a grasp was laid on his arm, and, turning, he beheld the detective.

"Who?"

"Phil."

"Good heavens, he will be burned to death!"

Up came the trumpet.

"Axes, my boys! Burst down the doors!"

Crash—crash! the splinters flew. Crash—crash! the door shook and shivered. Crash—crash—crash! a hole was made, through which streamed a flood of brilliant light.

"Lively, boys—lively!"

Crash—crash! the door was gone. Lou and the detective sprang inside, to see Phil Dobbins standing in a little unburned space, hemmed in on all sides by fire, his blackened bands, swollen to twice their natural size, extended in a speechless appeal for help.

He was a terrible sight to look at.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### DEATH BY FIRE.

Lou shuddered and turned his eyes away, but they wandered back of their own accord and drank in the deadly peril of Phil's situation; he tried to move, but seemed rooted with horror to the spot. Nor did he stir until the doomed youth opened his lips with the anguished cry:

"For heaven's sake, save me!"

The sight and the appeal made Lou forget the personality of Phil Dobbins—that he was his enemy. All that his mind contained now was the knowledge that the life of a human being was at stake.

"We must save him!" he gasped, turning to the detective. "Come!" and he rushed toward the door, even as Phil, supposing this a desertion to leave him to his fate, sent up a wild wail of horror.

"Courage!" Lou paused to shout, and then dashed outside.

Rattle—rumble—crash—grind—shouts—cheers—and with a hearty huzza Steamer No. 2 dashed up and halted in front of the store.

The truck was close behind, and in half a minute the hose was being rapidly unwound.

A word to the foreman of No. 2 and Lou flourished his trumpet, applied it to his lips and shouted:

"Lively, boys—lively—work with a will—a human life depends on it."

Everything being in readiness, Lou seized the nozzle and entered the store, dragging the hose behind him.

A gleam of desperate hope lighted up Phil's face, and then,

at the word of command from Lou, the steamer began to puff rapidly, the hose began to swell, with a rush the water was at the nozzle, and the next instant a hissing jet struck the fire.

But all to no purpose as far as extricating Phil was concerned, for the fire was gradually but surely closing in around him, and the look of hope which had played across Phil's haggard face was now being slowly replaced by a reflection of the awful despair in his guilty heart.

A sad expression appeared on Lou's face, for he was being convinced, though much against his will, that naught but the mercy of Heaven alone could do aught for the miserable being before him; he was beyond the reach of human aid, though that aid was within so few feet of him.

A wall of living fire was the impassable barrier.

How welcome was the grinding of wheels to Lou's ears at this juncture, telling of another engine having arrived. It was Phil's engine, Steamer No. 3.

Soon another stream of water played near Phil, endeavoring to quench the flames, and form a path from the island on which he stood, which was steadily growing smaller.

But the fire burned fiercely still, and the most they could do was to delay its progress, to avert for a short time longer the inevitable end.

Lou saw a possible chance for helping Phil, and sent for the longest and heaviest ladder on the truck, which was flung across the burning space, one end at Phil's feet, the other near Lou's.

Phil saw what it was meant he should attempt, and buttoning his clothing tightly around him, he bent his head and made a dash at the wall of fire.

He reached it; the onlookers held their breaths, thought he would rush through, and caught up coats to smother the flames that might linger in his clothing after the passage.

They saw him enter the flames and their hearts stood still. Pitying hope lighted their faces.

They sighed or groaned audibly, for they saw that he had been beaten back.

But he would not give up yet; and he crushed out the fire that had attacked his clothing, still further burning his hands, and drawing forth the most heart-rending shrieks of agony, that froze the blood in the veins of those who heard.

He rushed madly around the narrow confines of the island amidst the flames, so circumscribed now that it was barely three paces in diameter, his blood-shot eyes eagerly searching a break in the flames through which he might rush.

Exhausted at last, with the last remaining hope fled, he paused and stood still, while his haggard face could not more clearly have expressed "lost" had the words been printed in capitals on his forehead.

A swift death would have spared him these feelings, but this was not vouchsafed him. The sight of it slowly advancing upon him, with its attendant miseries, was a proper explanation for his life of darkness.

They knew that he was praying, for they saw him go down upon his knees, and then they saw his lips moving rapidly.

And as he prayed the remorseless fire-fiend drew nearer, and seized upon him once more.

He sprang to his feet, and a single glance showed him that there was no crushing it out again, for he was wrapped in a blaze.

With his hands clasped and directed in mute appeal to high Heaven, they saw him stagger and reel for a minute until he was beside the wall of fire.

They saw him try to get away from it, then saw him fall headlong into it—and saw him no more!

Until the end Lou sought to save Phil's life, but now he turned his attention to saving the store and its contents.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### HOME AT LAST.

The two men whom the elder Dobbins saw leaving the railroad station, the sight of whom inspired him with so much fear, the reader has doubtless guessed, were none other than Mr. Lane and the strange man who had suffered so much in the Brazilian wilds.

Such was the case.

Arriving in New York after a speedy voyage, Mr. Lane had taken the first train home, taking with him his companion in that awful journey from the Amazon River to civilization.

We will not attempt to describe Mr. Lane's feelings as he neared his home, any further than to state that his heart was beating fast and furious, his cheeks were flushed with joyful anticipations, while his feet almost flew over the ground.

He stopped short as he came before the mansion he had occupied, for it was ablaze with light, and sounds of merriment floated out on the night air.

Could his loss have created so few pangs of sorrow that his wife could so soon rejoice in the revelry of parties and dancing?

With a firm compression of the lips he strode up the gravelled walk, determined to know the worst.

A strange servant answered his ring, and when asked whether Mrs. Lane was home answered in the negative.

The puzzled gentleman was scanning the girl, when a gentleman who had emerged from the parlor shrank back aghast, and then sprang forward with extended hand.

"What!" he exclaimed, "alive and well?"

"Yes—explain this—you here—a party—my wife," disjointedly returned Mr. Lane.

"You wife is well."

"Is she here? The girl says not."

"No, she is not here. I live here now."

"You?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I bought the house from—"

"But my wife?" gasped Mr. Lane, not allowing him to finish.

"Lives in the little cottage in—gone!" exclaimed the gentleman, as Mr. Lane disappeared suddenly.

They reached the cottage, and a knock brought Gertie Kingston to the door.

"Is Mrs. Lane in?" he asked, in a voice whose agitation he could not entirely control.

"She is."

He brushed past her and into the parlor, where Mrs. Lane and Mrs. Kingston were quietly sewing, their faces turned to the door to see who it was that had called.

At sight of her husband the color fled from Mrs. Lane's face, the sewing fell from her nerveless hand, and she started to her feet, took one more glance at the intruder, and clutching a hand above her heart, exclaimed:

"My husband! Heaven be praised!"

As she staggered toward him strength deserted her, and the door had not a pair of strong arms closed around her, and tenderly carried her to a sofa, where she lay sobbing with joy and passionately kissing the face bent above her.

Mrs. Kingston understood the scene and glided toward the door, feeling that it would be sacrilege for other eyes to gaze on this reunion.

Gertie, too, had heard enough to know what had happened, and tears of joy were coursing down her cheeks; but she remembered Mr. Lane's companion, and motioned him to enter the little dining-room, whither she followed.

Tears, too, stood in Dave's eyes, and being seen by Gertie, a feeling of sympathy for him came into her heart.

Mrs. Kingston softly crossed the hall, and sank into a chair, crying:

"Gertie—Gertie, Mr. Lane has come back alive and well!"

Dave suddenly became erect, and fastened his eyes on the speaker, then let his gaze rest on Gertie searchingly for a minute, then bent a kindred look on Mrs. Kingston.

His face exhibited suppressed emotion, and the expression of his eyes was startled.

He watched Mrs. Kingston closely, and keenly scanned her face when she raised her bowed head, and for the first time became aware of the presence of a stranger.

She started with affright at his sharp look, and then a wild, unsettled look came into her eyes.

"Your name?" gasped Dave.

Mrs. Kingston was speechless.

"Speak!" cried Dave, his voice hoarse with emotion. "Speak, girl, is this your mother?"

"Yes."

"Your name is Gertie?"

"Yes."

"Gertie Kingston?"

"It is."

"Oh, heavens!" he gasped, and then, turning sharply on Mrs. Kingston, he cried: "Do you not know me? Look—look!" and he leaned toward her so that she could scan his face. "Do you see nothing familiar here? Speak—oh, Heaven—keep me no longer in suspense."

"My husband!"

"My wife!"

Sobbing with joy, Mrs. Kingston flung herself into the stranger's arms, while Gertie, with parted lips and straining eyes, looked on the scene with bated breath.

Then she understood it all, and bounding forward, cried: "Papa—papa!"

"Yes, my child, your papa is come," and sinking into the chair Mrs. Kingston had vacated, seated wife on one knee and daughter on the other.

Let us draw the curtain on these two happy reunions for a short while, and lift it again at the entrance into the dining-room of Mr. and Mrs. Lane.

Their astonishment can be better imagined than described, and each thanked Heaven for their share in bringing together this husband and wife, for Mrs. Lane had outlined the history of her guest, receiving in return a synopsis of the story of Mr. Lane's companion.

Mrs. Kingston had already spoken of her meeting Mr. Dobbins, who was none other than Dave Kingston's rascally partner in that long-ago time, while Mr. Lane had heard of Dobbins' actions on learning of his supposed death.

"The rascal!" he exclaimed. "He had but a bare five thousand dollar interest in the firm. He must have committed forgery by wholesale. I'll make the villain suffer. So Lou is after him now?"

"Yes."

"What say you, Kingston? Can you tear yourself away at this happy hour to confront the villain?"

"Yes," said Dave, with a grim compression of the lips that boded ill to the man who had wronged him so deeply.

They left the house and were hurrying up the street when that alarm of fire boomed out.

They paid no attention to it until after they had visited the residence of Mr. Dobbins and found that he was not at home; the servant said she had heard him go out.

"Perhaps he went to the fire," said Mr. Lane; "let's go there and see if we can find him."

It was another surprise when he found that it was his own store that was burning, but he forgot the loss that would result from this looking around for Dobbins.

Not seeing him in the crowd outside, Mr. Lane crowded through the throng, who made a passage for him with gaping mouths expressive of wonder, and entered the store just as Phil Dobbins sank amid the flames.

Mr. Dobbins was not there, but Mr. Lane saw a familiar figure, at sight of which his heart swelled with pride, for he had heard the story of Lou's noble efforts to gain a living for his mother as well as of his brave actions which had coupled his name with praise in everybody's mouth.

He reached his son's side at last, and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Father!" gasped Lou, as he turned and caught a glimpse of the person beside him, and then he added: "I was sure you were not dead, and that you would one day come back."

"Yes, my boy," was the reply. "It is I, alive and well. What about Mr. Dobbins?"

"Have you seen mother?" said Lou, excitedly, heedless of his father's question.

"Yes; but Dobbins?"

"In jail before this."

"Good!" exclaimed Mr. Lane. "And this fire—can it be managed? Dobbins was a rascal, and it is our property, not his, that is burning."

"It can and must be mastered," exclaimed Lou, and now having so much to work for, the trumpet was continually at his lips, and he seemed here, there and everywhere at almost the same minute, and always when a cool head and good management was needed.

Billy Grady worked like an inspired hero, and so did every member of No. 6 when it became known that it concerned the weal of their young foreman.

The fire was conquered, though not until it had destroyed some thousands of dollars' worth.

The next day the charred and blackened remains of Phil Dobbins, burned to a cinder, were exhumed from the rubbish and given decent burial.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### CONCLUSION.

Our story has been told and more need scarcely be added, yet we pause to write a few more lines ere letting the curtain descend on the drama from life.

Mr. Lane and Mr. Kingston the next day after their return visited the jail where Dobbins was confined, and Mr. Kingston at the first glance verified his wife's recognition of Mr. Dobbins as the partner who had defrauded and deserted him in the wilds of Brazil.

At first Dobbins denied his identity, but after hearing of

his son's miserable fate, he broke down completely and made a frank confession of his misdeeds, returned Mr. Lane all the money he had in his possession and gave him valuable papers, besides a document prepared by himself to enable Mr. Lane to recover other moneys which in his hasty preparation for flight he had been going to leave behind.

To Mr. Kingston he made over all his right and interest which he rightfully had owned in the firm of Lane & Dobbins, as a partial restitution of what he had defrauded him of in that distant time.

With a bowed head and broken look the prisoner said:

"Ah, I now see that evil deeds will surely meet their just reward. Little did I think a week ago that the wicked actions of so many years since would yet come to light. It may be for the best, though heaven knows it is hard to bear."

Whether his professed repentance was genuine or assumed they never knew.

Happy as each was in his restoration to home and family, they could cherish no feelings of malice toward him, and harbored no feeling but sympathy for him, which resulted in his being freed and allowed to go where his pleasure called.

He disappeared the day of his release, and was never seen or heard of afterward.

The body of Danks was brought from old Zachary's hut and buried by the authorities.

Mr. Lane had been elected a director of the Carbondale Insurance Company a few days before his sailing to foreign lands. By some oversight the directorship, supposed to be vacant because of his death, had never been filled, so Mr. Lane was still one of its managers.

There was suspicion of foul play regarding the burning of the store, but the position Mr. Lane held enabled him to demand the benefit of the doubt, and a compromise was effected.

One other good thing he did at Lou's solicitation was to demand a reopening of Zachary Kemp's disputed claim, which resulted in its payment.

Lou was led to urge this after having several conversations with Zachary, who produced the revolver he had stolen from Danks' room, with which Lou had been brought so near death's door, and in which he had been a witness to that fatal affray which made Phil Dobbins a murderer, and related how he had found the pocket-knife which Lou returned to Phil. During the revelation of these things some stray words led Lou to suspect that the old man was the firebug, and quickly discovered the motive when he reflected that no building had been fired that was not insured in the Carbondale Company.

Incendiary fires disturbed Carbondale no more, all the obloquy for the past falling on the head of Danks. Lou kept the secret he guessed at, and Zachary Kemp lived unsuspected in the midst of Carbondale.

Of course Gertie Kingston did not return to work in the factory, and her place was filled by another girl the day following her father's return.

For several weeks the Kingstons remained as guests at the Lanes, and then they removed to a neat little cottage, while Mr. Lane removed to a more stylish residence, the former home of Mr. Dobbins.

During this time there had been much laying together of heads, and when the damage caused by the fire was repaired and the large store once more opened, a sign above the store read:

LANE, SON & KINGSTON.

Several broad hints have appeared in the columns of our story concerning the existence of something warmer than a friendly feeling between Lou and Gertie (we had not space for more than hints), for had we endeavored to note their actions our story could have treated of little else.

After reading the above lines the reader will be ready to throw down the paper, exclaiming:

"I know what's coming: Lou and Gertie were married. That's the way stories always close."

The reader is right; they were married, not on paper, but in fact, and their first baby, a boy, was named after a particular friend, the author of these lines.

Carbondale did exist, and does still, and H. and L. No. 6 is still there, though Billy Gray is foreman.

Next week's issue will contain "DESERTED; OR, THRILLING ADVENTURES IN THE FROZEN NORTH." By Howard Austin.

## CURRENT NEWS

All of the expenses of the funeral of Michael Donohue, a prominent pioneer, who died at his home near Jefferson, Ore., recently, were paid before the burial. This was in accordance with his expressed wish before he died.

The reports of the New York Police Department show that 1,831 persons outside the city and 4,035 living inside the city were reported missing last year. Nearly all of them were found by the police or returned home of their own accord.

Fresh pears, the second crop of the season, is a unique dish which appeared on a number of Christmas tables in Texas. After the August 16, 1915, storm, when the trees were stripped of leaves, trees put out new leaves and blossomed again. The fruit is claimed to be of better quality than the first crop.

Miss Edith Reese, a young stenographer, dropped dead when she read that the Pittsburgh Bank for Savings closed its doors recently. All her little hard-earned money was in the bank. The physician called to her says Miss Reese had heart disease and that the shock of the news provoked the fatal crisis.

Writers on arboriculture have from time to time called attention to the gradual disappearance of cedar trees in this country, and it seems that there is a dearth of cedar wood generally. This has set the chemist to work, and a Berlin firm is now making an excellent substitute for the cedar casings of black lead pencils from potatoes. It is said that the potato case submits itself to the penknife as easily as does the cedar wood, and, what is more important, the cost is very much less.

Irish agriculturists are interested in the alleged discovery of a method of converting ordinary peat into a highly concentrated fertilizer by a simple and inexpensive bacterial treatment. The discoverer is Professor W. B. Bottomley, of the Royal Botanic Society. Professor Bottomley's principle is that bacteria facilitate the chemical processes connected with plant growing, and the peat bacterial culture immensely facilitates food absorption by vegetables and other farm crops. He has exhibited specimens of mature potatoes grown in seven weeks by the use of the peat fertilizer.

Financial equality between husband and wife was advocated by Miss Mabel Jacobson, daughter of Mrs. C. H. Jacobson, acting president of the Housewives' League, and Earl E. Lee, of Victor, Colo., when each laid down \$1.25 for their respective shares of the marriage license recently. "Come through with \$1.25," said the groom when he learned the price of the matrimonial permit. Miss Jacobson "came through" with her half and the prospective hus-

band initiated a life of salary-splitting by his own contribution. They had agreed to share the expense of the wedding and started with the license. When they met the minister some time later they had to go to a corner drug store to get change before the ceremony could proceed. Each owned a half interest in the gold band, which, on the bride's left third finger, announced the knot was tied.

Mr. and Mrs. O. Floyd Hiser, of near Nevada, Iowa, have an avocation providing a daily hour of pleasure and \$500 profit a year. Trees on their farm long have been the habitat of a colony of the cato cala moth. They catch the moths and butterflies and sell them to museums, collectors and laboratories for prices ranging from 5 cents to \$1 apiece. Several times they have received orders from abroad. The Hisers follow the pursuit only early on summer nights. They mark trees with white cloths to attract attention and then spray a solution of sugar and stale beer over the foliage. Often they have caught from fifty to 100 specimens in an hour.

The \$500 prize offered by Jules S. Bache, of New York City, for the best essay on the wisdom and necessity for preparedness, the contest being held under the auspices of the National Security League, was won by Landon M. Townsend, of Columbia University, according to an announcement made Dec. 20, 1915, at the offices of the league, 31 Pine street, New York City. The essays were judged by Dr. Cyrus Northrup, president emeritus of the University of Minnesota; Dr. Harry Pratt Judson, president of the University of Chicago, and Professor Albert Bushnell Hart, of Harvard University. The essay closed with an admonition to heed the counsel of Washington: "If we desire to repel insult, we must be able to repel it; if we desire to secure peace, it must be known at all times that we are ready for war."

A correspondent of the New York Sun reports that the gross receipts of the Krupp Stock Company of Essen, Germany, have been increased for the past year to \$32,170,000, compared to \$16,317,500 in 1914. These figures, high as they may seem, do not by any means exhaust the actual profit of the company. The expenses for new plants, additional constructions and buildings and other supplements which had become necessary for the firm, feverishly working day and night to fill the enormous orders for military supplies, were covered by the running revenues, about 150 per cent. of the amount of the surplus income having been expended on new construction, credit, etc. The actual profit was \$24,712,500, or more than double that of 1914. Besides \$1,875,000 for general reserves, \$1,250,000 for special credits and \$2,500,000 for war reserves, the company has expended about \$9,000,000 for purposes of public welfare.

## BOWERY BEN

— OR —

## THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME

BY J. P. RICHARDS

(A Serial Story)

## CHAPTER VIII (continued)

When he reached the inner door he tried it; found it locked on the inside, grunted and then gave the signal.

In a moment the bolt was withdrawn and the door swung inward by Hudson, who came halfway up the steps.

"H'm! You've been gone long enough," he growled, as he waited for the boy to pass him, and then closed and barred the door. "Set it on the table. Have some yourself. It's just flat enough now to suit you, I guess."

Ben set the pail on the table and then went and sat at the foot of the steps, his head bent, but his eyes searching every corner of the place, nevertheless.

Hudson got a dirty glass from a cupboard at one side, dipped it in the pail, drank its contents without a breath, and put it on the table beside him.

Ben paid little attention to him, but began taking in all the details of the room and getting them well fixed in his mind.

There were six bunks and they were all unoccupied, so far as he could see, except one, before which were drawn a pair of faded calico curtains strung on a wire.

Lizzie was probably in this bunk, and the boy determined to ascertain this as soon as he could.

Opposite the steps was a small door between two tiers of bunks, and over it was a faint light, but whether it led to a room beyond or to the street, the boy could not tell.

At one end of the room was a fireplace with a low fire smoldering in the grate, while close to the table lay a good-sized iron poker, though why it should be on the table instead of on the hearth, Ben could not tell until Hudson's next move informed him.

Hudson went to the cupboard, got a metal cup or shaker, nearly filled it from the pail, which evidently contained ale, took the poker to the fire and thrust it deep in the coals, and then got some spices and put them in the ale in the shaker.

When the poker was red-hot he thrust it into the shaker, the ale sending up clouds of steam.

Hudson poured the decoction into the glass, drank it slowly and then put the glass and the poker on the table.

"Those fellows take their own time," growled Hudson. "Have a drink, Tony?"

The boy shook his head, and Hudson relighted his cigar, which had gone out, and smoked in silence.

In a few minutes there was a footstep in the passage outside, and then two double raps at the door.

"Go open the door," said Hudson with a start, and Ben arose, withdrew the bolt and swung the door open.

Then, to his surprise, instead of seeing a man, as he had expected, he beheld the bent form and hideous face of Granny Green.

"Ha; you didn't expect me, did you?" croaked the hag, as she came hobbling down the steps on her staff. "I was

burned out to-night, and I thought I'd pay a visit to the old place. Any of the boys about?"

"No," said Hudson, shortly.

Ben closed and barred the door and sat at the foot of the steps.

"What have you been about, Jim?" asked the hag, walking over to the table. "You haven't been to see me."

"No, I haven't."

"Who's in the bunk?" piped the hag, pointing with her staff.

"Nobody."

At that moment a sigh was heard from behind the curtain, and then a small, white arm and hand were thrust out from under it.

"H'm! Girl again, as usual," snarled the hag, and, hurriedly crossing the room, she threw back the faded curtains and revealed the child Lizzie lying asleep on the coarse bed.

"Good!" croaked Granny Green. "It couldn't be better, but you lied to me just the same."

## CHAPTER IX.

## BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

It was with the utmost difficulty that Ben kept back an exclamation of satisfaction at finding that Lizzie was really in the underground den, and it was only by shuffling his feet and shifting his position on the steps, after the manner of the real Tony, that he controlled himself.

"H'm! You stole her without saying anything to me about it," snarled Granny Green. "You thought you'd work on your own hook, hey; thought you'd shake the old woman, did you, and work independent?"

"Haven't had time to see you since," growled Hudson. "Had a chance to do it and did it. Went there, found the door locked. Then I hid in a corner, heard the boy come up, give a signal and saw the kid let him in."

"H'm! And then you hung about till he went out and sneaked up and gave the signal yourself?"

"Yes; and nabbed the kid quick. I had some stuff handy and she keeled over as quick as you please and gave me no trouble."

"Ha! then that was what brought the boy to my house? He thought I had the brat, and came to see. And I never suspected. He must have been there again to-night and it was him Stapleton saw. That boy is as sharp as a weasel; you'll have to keep a watch on him."

"H'm! I ain't afraid of him; he can't do nothing," retorted Hudson, sneeringly, and Ben could scarcely refrain from chuckling.

"You're a fool!" croaked the old woman. "You don't know the boy. Well, we've got the brat again. Your plans and mine were to sell her to her folks. Well, now I've got a better one."

"What is it?" asked Hudson, eagerly. "H'm! this is dry work. Here, Tony, put the poker in the fire and mix me up another drink."

The supposed Tony merely snored.

"Hallo, Tony, wake up!"

The boy's head sank lower on his folded arms and he snored louder than before.

(To be continued)

## ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

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A colt with five legs, absolutely normal in other respects, eight months old and sound as a dollar, is in the possession of Joseph Woody, No. 502 Boyd street, Paducah, Ky. Mr. Woody has nursed his unusual pet from the infant stage, and says it is as good a colt as ever was born. He is contemplating the sale of the animal as soon as he receives a good offer.

A notice bearing the name of Supt. Bell, of the Huntington Division of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, has been posted in the offices of the system at Russell warning members of the various train crews to cease "flirting with the wives of certain residents in Ashland, Kenova and Huntington while on their runs through those cities, as the husbands of these women had filed numerous complaints with the main office of the company and were now threatening suits for damage."

The remarkable record of a tenantless jail at East Grand Forks, Minn., for 120 hours recently was broken when J. W. Lafferty, a transient, was arrested on a charge of passing a fraudulent check. The city's police force has been cut in half as a result of the arrival of the dry regime. The drought here also has affected Grand Forks, N. Dak., where there has not been an arrest for drunkenness for more than a week, and the mayor of that city also contemplates a considerable reduction in the police force.

A remarkable fish known as *Protopterus annectens* is found throughout the whole of tropical Africa, but is most common near the West Coast, where it sometimes attains a length of six feet. During the dry season, when many of the ponds dry up, the fish descends some distance into the mud and forms a rounded hollow for a nest, which is lined by a capsule of hardened mucus secreted by the glands of the skin. It hibernates thus for nearly six months, drawing its sustenance from the fat secreted when it is active.

The body of Fred Lawson, eleven years old, of Rock Island, Ill., swelled to twice its normal size as the result of an accident, and for a time his life was endangered. While coasting the boy was struck in the neck by a piece of wagon wheel rim protruding from the ground. The bronchial tube was punctured and in exhaling his breath much of the air passed through this puncture and under the skin, causing the body to inflate. Young Lawson was at the point of suffocation when physicians arrived. Their first act was to puncture the skin of the neck and allow the air to escape. They say the boy will live.

Anton Gamer, a dry cleaner, of Parsons, Kan., through a mistake, ordered 100 instead of 10 gallons of carbon tetrachloride to be used in his cleaning process last February,

paying \$1.29 a gallon. He attempted to persuade the drug company to take back the 90 gallons, but they refused and he figured he had lost over a hundred dollars in the transaction. The war, in the meantime, caused the price of the chemical to soar, and recently the chemical company of whom he bought the order paid him \$30.15 a gallon for the 90 gallons they refused almost a year ago. Gamer netted a profit of more than \$2,500.

A new and ingenious method used by the Germans for attacking the defenders of a fort with poisonous gas is reported from Petrograd. Balloons that are shaped somewhat like those with which children amuse themselves, but larger, are used for the purpose. Each balloon is filled with enough illuminating gas to make it float, while in a bottom compartment is a quantity of the poisonous gas. The balloons are set adrift on a favorable wind, and when they are directly above the fort that is being attacked, the German sharpshooters puncture them with rifle bullets. The bursting of the thin covering completely destroys the balloon. The illuminating gas rises, while the poisonous gas, being heavier than the air, settles into the fort. It is reported by the Popular Mechanics Magazine that the poisonous gas from 1,800 of these balloons was dropped by this method into the fortress at Ossowetz, and that this was the principal reason why the defenders were able to hold the fortress for only two days.

In 1863 specie became scarce and in place of it postage stamps came into use, later incased in light metal frames to withstand wear of handling. These were soon followed by copper coins, the size of the present-day cent, of one cent value, issued by merchants and bearing the name and business of the individual firm issuing them. Later small scrip of 5 to 50 cents denomination, the so-called "shin-plasters," were issued by the Government, and these drove all else out of circulation. Up to the time of the disappearance of specie from circulation the copper cent in use was as large a coin as is our silver 25-cent piece to-day, bearing on one side the "head of Liberty" and on the obverse the words "One Cent" inclosed in a wreath. Somewhere an ingenious Democrat had a pin soldered to the obverse side of one of these coins, and, attaching it to his coat lapel, displayed it as a souvenir of the good "coin of our daddies" and an implied rebuke of Republican policy that drove it out of circulation. His example was quickly followed and spread rapidly, the disappearing big pennies being sought eagerly for the purpose. Ere long, however, a quick-witted Republican somewhere, stung by the taunt, retorted with the epithet "Copperhead," suggested by the "head of Liberty" upon the displayed coin, and quickly the term spread, applied to Democrats generally, but particularly to those favoring the South. This was too much, more than the Democrats had anticipated, and wearing the copper cent pin soon went out of fashion, the epithet continuing long to plague the Democrats.

## FROM ALL POINTS

Mrs. Margaret Jane Cathers, eighty, of near Newbern, Ind., has just learned that she is a daughter of Drewery A. Massey, one hundred and eight years old, who died in Rush County the other day, and that she lived within fifty miles of him for half a century without knowing his whereabouts.

China draws its principal supplies of soft woods from the United States and Japan. In 1913, the last year for which figures are available, China imported from the United States approximately 79,700,000 feet board measure, valued at \$1,500,000. These imports were more than twice the amount of the preceding year and 16,000,000 feet in excess of 1910.

Every inch of rainfall above four inches in the Dakotas, California, Washington, Kansas and Nebraska in May and June means an increase of \$15,000,000 in the wheat crop. Every inch of rainfall above three inches in July in Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Iowa, Ohio and Nebraska increases the value of the corn crop by \$160,000,000. These figures are compiled by E. J. Cragoe for the Journal of Commerce.

It is anticipated that large quantities of oranges and other citrus fruits will be available for shipment from South Africa to England during the coming season. In another four years the South African shipments of such fruit will, according to the estimate of C. du P. Chiappini, British Government Trades Commissioner to South Africa, amount to 400,000 boxes, and in ten years to 4,000,000 boxes annually.

Robbers broke into the saloon of J. H. Thomas, Evansville, Ind., one morning early. Thomas keeps two dogs in the saloon at night, and one of them, a fox terrier, rushed from the door the robbers left open and ran a block away to the home of his master and pawed on the door and whined until Thomas got up, put on his clothes and returned with him to the saloon. When Thomas went to the saloon the robbers had fled.

A year ago "Bobby" Striker, then four years of age, disappeared from St. Petersburg, Fla. Despite all the efforts of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Richter, of No. 474 McDonough street, Brooklyn, no trace of the boy has been found. On the anniversary of his disappearance, they renewed the reward of \$500 for the boy, and no questions asked. Robert Allen Striker was playing in the yard of his uncle at St. Petersburg when he disappeared.

The annual production of fish in Spain amounts to nearly \$20,000,000 yearly in value. There are 586 steam, and 15,194 sailing vessels engaged in the industry. The annual production of tinned fish is 3,500,000 cases of ten tins to the case. The pack of Portugal is about 1,500,000 cases,

and that of France in normal times about 1,000,000 cases. Large quantities of Spanish-packed fish are sent abroad under French and Italian labels.

John M. Seaman, two-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Seaman, of Los Angeles, Cal., is dead at Ontario following an attack by a large rooster at the ranch home of the child's grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. V. Lawrence. John and his mother visited at the ranch. The chickens were a novelty to the boy and he was anxious to feed them. With prodigious bravery that was thought only childishly cute he accomplished his desire. Recently he was so engaged when a large rooster jumped at the little fellow and buried its spurs deeply in his scalp. Blood poisoning developed and the child died in a hospital after much suffering.

In southern Siam, Bangkok, the capital, is the principal port, and had at the last enumeration a population of 540,679, of which a large proportion are Chinese. The City of Bangkok is situated on both sides of the river Menam Chao Phya, about twenty-five miles upstream from the bar at its mouth. This bar forms a great obstacle to shipping, allowing only vessels to cross at high tide drawing from 12 feet 6 inches to 14 feet 6 inches, according to the season of the year. Vessels of greater depth, however, find a safe anchorage at all times at Kohsichang, an island located about twenty-five miles from the mouth of the river.

The Secretary of the Navy has written a letter to the National Amateur Wireless Association, of which Guglielmo Marconi is president, expressing his approval of the organization, and asking that its members hold themselves ready to co-operate with the Government if their services should be needed in a "time of public peril." Mr. Daniels expressed the belief that such an organization would be of the greatest aid to the United States in carrying out a preparedness plan. He requested that a list of the members be turned over to the Government, and this will be done. He declined an invitation to act as an honorary vice-president of the association, having declined all such offers since entering public life.

The police of East Orange, N. J., asked the police of New York and other cities to make a search of pawn shops for jewels worth more than \$30,000 which were stolen the other night by a burglar from the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Eagles at 49 North Walnut street. On his return with his wife from a visit with friends Mr. Eagles saw that a hole had been broken near the lock of the glass door in front of the house, so he hurried upstairs. When he arrived upstairs, however, the burglar had climbed out of a rear window and was running away. It was found that all of Mrs. Eagles' jewels were missing from her bedroom, the principal one being a diamond lavalliere worth \$25,000.

# "A. J." FROM JAYVILLE

—OR—

## THE BOY WHO WAS LOST IN THE BOWERY

By William Wade

(A Serial Story)

### CHAPTER XI.

#### A. J. ELECTED A MEMBER OF THE GREEN JAYS' CLUB.

It is no part of our purpose to describe a slugging match in all its details.

A. J. lacked science, but he was all muscle and grit.

Jack Carter put up a fair fight, and showed considerable skill, but in point of strength he was no match for the boy from Jayville, and in the fourth round A. J. punished him terribly.

It began with Carter losing control of himself and striking A. J. below the belt.

Cool as a cucumber, A. J. sailed in then, and did him up in great shape.

There was little that was attractive about the fellow at the start, but when it came to two black eyes and a broken nose, his countenance certainly looked picturesque.

Half stunned, bleeding, and only too anxious to see the last of it, Carter allowed himself to be kicked out of the house without a word of protest.

Charlie Fitch threw his clothes after him, and returned to join the others in shaking hands with A. J.

Then some one called out:

"Where's Monty?"

No one knew.

In the confusion Mr. Jack Carter's sponsor had slipped away unobserved.

"He ought to be expelled!" cried Charlie Fitch.

"He will be if he don't resign in a hurry," added Will Potter.

"He shan't resign! He mustn't be given the chance," said Tom Roden. "He must be unanimously kicked out of the club, and that's what. Now, Charlie, open a fresh bottle and we will drink the health of A. J."

It was drunk standing, and amid wild cheers.

As for A. J. himself, he was allowed to drink seltzer, and never a protest this time.

Young Montgomery's friends, who were also members of the Green Jays' Club, remained behind, and drank with the rest.

A. J. was coming on fast.

He clinked glasses and joined in the talk.

He had filled the bill and made the fun for the evening, and it had not been necessary to get him drunk, either.

The toast drunk, Charlie Fitch rapped on the table and said:

"Brothier Green Jays, you will now come to order. As president of an honorable body, I now declare the Green Jays' Club in special session, and propose for honorary membership my friend, Mr. Andrew Jackson Jarvis, of Jayville, New York. And I move that Mr. Jarvis be ad-

mitted without initiation, he having already proved himself a true Jay in every sense of the word."

Of course, the vote was unanimous, and A. J. was elected honorary member of the Green Jays' Club amid wild cheers.

This was not all. One of the boys who had won a bet on the fight now proposed that all who had won should turn their winnings over to A. J.

But this didn't work.

"No, no, boys," said A. J. "I won't have it. I've told you before and I tell you again that I'm no beggar. I don't want your money, and, what's more, I won't take it. The twenty-five dollars is mine, and it's enough to get me home. I think you are all good fellows, although you do drink, which I hope you will quit soon. I invite you all to come up to Jayville next summer. You shall have my boat for nothing, and I'll guide you to the finest trout stream that ever you struck, and it shan't cost you one red cent."

After this, of course, A. J. was voted a fine fellow, and everybody wanted to shake hands with him, and did.

Charlie Fitch then went to the door and looked out.

"There isn't a soul on the beach, boys, and it's after midnight," he said. "What do you say if we strip and make a run for the surf? You aren't afraid of salt water, I suppose, A. J.?"

"I never tried it," replied our hero, "but if a feller can swim in fresh water they say 'tain't no trick at all to swim in the ocean. I'll go you and be glad of the chance."

It was off clothes then, and in a minute came the grand rush for the surf.

The tide was up, and the surf tumbling on the beach in the silvery moonlight looked beautiful.

A. J. was completely carried away by the excitement of the occasion. He plunged in boldly just as a big wave came rolling in.

Not being used to "combers," A. J. was tumbled about in lively style.

He bobbed up serenely on the other side of the rollers, however, and showed himself a fine swimmer.

Indeed, all the Green Jays proved themselves good water dogs.

They were pretty jolly dogs, too.

They kept shouting and calling to each other as they splashed and kicked about.

They had a queer squawking ery, supposed to resemble that of a blue jay, no doubt, which they let off on all occasions.

They seemed to take a lot of satisfaction in guying each other, too, and much that was said A. J. could not understand the meaning of.

One thing he did not fail to notice, however, and that was that they no longer guyed him.

After a while one and another struck back to the beach. A. J. was one of the first to go.

Swimming in salt water had proved a little more strenuous than he had expected, and he was ready to give it up.

As the boys came ashore they made a dash across the sand for the cottage.

(To be continued)

## A FEW GOOD ITEMS

### WATER 15 CENTS A BUCKET.

The cold weather at Anchorage, Alaska, the new town established by the Government as construction headquarters for the Alaskan railroad, has caused a water shortage there, with corresponding high prices.

Pending the completion of the water system, which the Government engineers hope to have working shortly, all water for domestic purposes at Anchorage is being taken from holes chopped in the ice on Ship Creek. The other day water sold at Anchorage at \$1 a barrel. If purchased by the bucket the price was 15 cents.

### 1,088 SHIPS USED CANAL.

A detailed account of the operation and maintenance of the Panama Canal during the first ten months and a half after its opening to commerce in August, 1914, is given in the annual report of Governor Goethals of the Canal Zone. Final construction work just prior to the canal's opening also is described in the report, which embraces the fiscal year ending June 30 last, prior to the earth slide which blocked the channel.

Between Aug. 15, 1914, and June 30, 1915, 530 vessels, representing a net Panama Canal tonnage of 1,884,728 and cargo tonnage of 2,125,735; were passed through from Atlantic to Pacific, and 558 vessels, representing a Panama Canal tonnage of 1,958,307 and a cargo tonnage of 2,844,057, from Pacific to Atlantic, making a total of 1,088 vessels with a net canal tonnage of 4,969,792. During this period three minor slides interrupted traffic, the channel being closed from Oct. 14 to 20 and Oct. 31 to Nov. 4, 1914, and March 4 to 10, 1915.

### IRON JEWELRY.

Many months ago, almost from the beginning of the war, we were told that German women, following the example of their great-grandmothers, voluntarily gave up their gold rings, necklets, earrings, bracelets and ornaments of every description, to be made or coined into money for the national need, says Answers.

Whatever truth there may be in this story, there is no doubt that many German women have been presented by the Government with iron rings to replace the gold ones they have parted with.

But that happened a century ago. Then Prussia, crushed by Napoleon, and bankrupt, was in dire need of money, and the Prussian women gave up all their jewels and ornaments to help cope with the prevailing poverty. And out of this sacrifice a new industry arose.

This was nothing less than the manufacture of cast-iron jewelry to replace the gold and silver ornaments which the great ladies of the kingdom had dispensed. At first sight no material would seem less promising as a substitute for the precious metals than iron. It was entirely owing to the wonderful craftsmanship of the ironworkers that the results were so extraordinary.

Strength, of course, would be a distinguishing mark of such jewelry, and a complete set of these iron ornaments, now in the possession of a Toronto jeweler, is as rigid and firm as on the day it was made. This particular set, comprising a pair of earrings, necklace, locket and bracelets, has not been looked after until lately.

The ornaments have a wonderfully fragile appearance, due entirely to the exquisite workmanship. Their weight, too, is astonishingly small, the lightness of every article being a feature of the set.

### BASEBALL OUTLOOK.

Baseball's outlook for next season is more encouraging than it has been since 1908, when the Giants and Cubs were turning people away from the Polo Grounds on the memorable occasion when Fred Merkle failed to touch second base. This year baseball will take on a new interest. During the last two years of Federal League activity the public has become more or less wearied and many former fans have kept away from the ball parks. The three-league idea broke up the ancient dual rivalry. When a man looked at his paper in the morning over his toast and coffee too many box scores and too many league standings stared him in the face.

Then the legal aspect did harm. Lawyers and courts tore baseball to shreds. The inner workings of the game, the politics and the tricks were laid bare. It was like going behind the scenes at the theater. That was the trouble with baseball last season. What the public wanted to see was the teams on the diamond fighting it out. What they did see was this team or that team playing politics, with little or no consideration for the public which pays at the gate.

Fundamentally, baseball is based on sentiment. New York is enthusiastic when Matty pitches because Matty's name has always been associated with the Giants. The New York public has a local pride in him because he has been loyal to the cause of McGraw. If Matty had jumped to the Federal League, as many other players jumped, Gotham would have soon lost its interest. The baseball public last season was bored by the players who jumped their contracts and left their clubs in the lurch. After all, the rabid fan in the bleachers likes a good sportsman on the field as much as he likes a good ball player. A jumper is not a good sportsman, and no one knows this better than the baseball fans.

Revival of baseball next season should follow the signing the peace pact in Cincinnati. The public is usually quick to forget the past, and will doubtless take a new interest in the game, now that the outlaws are out of the way. What the public wants this season is more baseball and less politics. The business men of the Major leagues see this, and the word has been passed around for clubs and players to get into the game more for the game's sake. The game is the thing, and the sooner the professionals see this the better it will be for baseball.

## INTERESTING TOPICS

There is not a matchsafe made, so far as I know, that meets all of the requirements of the sportsman as well as a 10 or 12 gauge brass shell closed with a cork stopper. This makes a safe that is absolutely waterproof, easily opened, is cheap, and that will float. If one wishes to provide against the loss of the stopper a cord may be fastened about the cork, and the other end fastened about the base of the shell.

Thomas H. Nudd, seventy-one years old, of Hampton Beach, N. H., suffered a broken neck by falling from a wagon fourteen years ago. He has now astonished physicians by regaining the use of his body and limbs. The other week, accompanied by his wife, he came to Boston to make his home with his daughter. His neck is healed, though the head is bent forward. He underwent no surgical operation.

Possibly it is not generally known that imported orange marmalade is mainly produced from turnips. A friend of ours was traveling in Scotland and, seeing vast fields of turnips, asked a farmer: "What in the world do you use all these turnips for?" "Don't you know," said the Scotchman, "that these are used for orange marmalade which we export to your country and which is very popular all through the United States?" It is very noticeable that the Underwood bill of 1913 reduced the duty on orange marmalade from two cents to one cent a pound. If you want pure orange marmalade, make it yourself, or buy the American.

The Territory of Hawaii now has in hand reclamation works that will cost about \$300,000, with several other projects in contemplation. At Honolulu a strip of land half a mile wide, starting near the wharves and extending for about three miles along the shore, is being put in sanitary condition. Another project well under way, known as the Waiolama reclamation project, will improve the waterfront of Hilo, on the Island of Hawaii. Preliminary surveys are being made for the Waikiki reclamation project, and filling will soon begin. This parcel of land adjoins the famous Waikiki Beach, and its reclamation will open a large area of desirable residence property.

A letter written by the Rev. Samuel Ward, of Neoga, Ill., Nov. 6, 1860, the day he cast a ballot for "Good Abe Lincoln," was received through the mails the other day by Prof. W. B. Ward, of Occidental College, a son of H. O. Ward, of Zanesville, the man to whom it was addressed. Where the letter went after it was mailed will remain a mystery. The next postmark after that of Neoga in 1860 is that of College Station, N. Y., Aug. 28, 1910. The letter reached Zanesville last October, and, after search had been made for the addressees, was forwarded to Los Angeles to Prof. Ward, who lacks three days of being as old as the letter.

With the advent of the official cat rats will find life hardly worth living in Togoland. The governor of that German colony has decreed that in public buildings where natives congregate, such as schools, hospitals or prisons, cats are to be kept officially. Statistics show that the use of rat skins in the manufacture of fancy articles is increasing. In 1914 the trade in Great Britain alone amounted to \$250,000, and supplies of brown rat skins are being sought in lots of from 100 to 10,000. It is proposed to start a business in Calcutta for securing and preparing the skins of the brown rat to be used among a variety of purposes in the binding of books and the making of purses, gloves and various articles for women's use and wear. The supply of rats in Calcutta is inexhaustible.

The steamer Eastland, which overturned at its dock in the Chicago River July 24, 1915, causing the loss of 812 lives, was sold at auction the other day to Captain Edward A. Evers, of the Illinois Naval Reserve, for \$46,000. The vessel was offered for sale by the United States marshal, on an order from the United States District Court, based upon claims for salvage by the wrecking company which raised the ship. Captain Evers has announced that the boat will be used by the Naval Reserve after certain alterations have been made in the hull that he is sure will make it seaworthy. The Eastland is said to have cost the original owners \$350,000. For a time it was owned in Cleveland, Ohio, and carried excursionists out of that city.

The history of the tilefish, as retold in a recent circular of the Bureau of Fisheries, is full of romantic interest. This fish was discovered in 1879, when a New England fisherman, Capt. Kirby, caught several thousand pounds of a "strange and handsomely colored fish" not far south of Nantucket, and sent a specimen to the United States Fish Commission, which found it to be a new species. The fish proved to have edible qualities of a high order, and to be present in enormous numbers within easy reach of the coast. Hardly, however, had measures been set on foot to establish the fishing as an industry, when the species was apparently exterminated by a mysterious disturbance along the edge of the slope. In March and April, 1882, dead tilefish covered an area 170 miles long and 25 miles wide, and it was estimated that upwards of 1,400,000,000 had perished. The most plausible explanation of this disaster is that it was due to a displacement of the gulf stream. The tilefish is a bottom dweller, and also requires a rather high-water temperature. Apparently the gulf stream, receding from the shore, no longer extended downward to the shelving bottom, and the fish perished in the colder water which replaced it. After ten years, during which none of these fish were taken, the gulf stream returned to its old course, and the tilefish reappeared. It is now as abundant as ever, and the Bureau of Fisheries is trying to make its merits known to the public.

# PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, JANUARY 19, 1916.

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## GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

Old Spanish and French coins to the value of \$1,250,000 are at the United States Mint in Philadelphia to be changed into current money for the Republic of Cuba. The coins were packed in twenty-two kegs and came from Cuba by express.

In the study of the lives of seventy-three persons more than ninety years old living in the city of Dresden, Saxony, it has been discovered that all sleep in closed rooms at night and abhor bathing, and all sleep eight or nine hours daily. They vary in some of their habits, but these three—plenty of sleep, and avoidance of draughts at night and of bathing—are common to all.

Large tracts of Persia are uninhabited. The total population is about 9,000,000, which is only 14 to the square mile. The nomads (Arabs, Kurds, Leks, Turks, Lurs, Baluchis and gypsies) move from place to place, according as their animals need pasturage or as their other interests demand.

Additional assets, amounting to \$10,000, mostly in gold and currency, were found by relatives in the home of Miss Mary Powell, seventy years old, who died the other day in Bellefontaine, Ohio. She left valuable real estate. A search of her home revealed cash and securities hidden in almost every conceivable place.

"Buck fever" hunters have been bringing in practically all the deer recently in Minnesota, much to the chagrin of the expert nimrods, who have seemingly worked on the wrong "hunch" as to runways. Clerks and delivery boys hiked for the woods, with the result that six fine bucks were hung up that day by lads who do know the difference between a "30-30" and a bean-shooter.

There are many conveniences of the present day which were denied to the ancients. Still they enjoyed some luxuries which the people of this age deem comparative novelties. For instance, a vast number of people suppose that the canning of fruits, an industry which of late years has attained so vast an importance, is of recent growth; but, as a matter of fact, we are indebted to Pompeii for it. Years

ago, when the excavations were just beginning, a party of Americans found in what had been the pantry of a house many jars of preserved figs. One was opened, and they were found to be fresh and good. Investigation showed that the figs had been put into jars in a heated state, an aperture left for the steam to escape, and then sealed with wax. The hint was taken, and the next year the preserving of fruit in tins was introduced into America, the process being identical with that in vogue in Pompeii twenty centuries ago. Those who eat them do not realize that they are indebted for this art to a people who were literally ashes before the dawn of the Christian era.

## GRINS AND CHUCKLES

She—Do you believe men are as brave now as they used to be? He—Sure; just see the poetry some men write now.

"Ah, my lad, the early bird gets the worm!" "I guess dey has, boss. I been a-diggin' bait here since 4 o'clock an' ain't got none yet."

"What makes Peck look so worried?" "He's been contesting his wife's will." "Why, I didn't know his wife was dead." "That's just it—she isn't."

Mrs. Knicker—Is Mrs. Amos a well-informed woman? Mrs. Bocker—Yes, indeed; her cook has lived with all the other families in the neighborhood.

Mabel—What! He proposed to you on his motor car, after knowing you only a week? Dolly—Yes, and I told him he was exceeding the speed limit!

Girl—jokingly—I'd like a place where I'll have everything I want, nothing to do, and no one to boss me. Clerk—This, miss, is an employment office, not a matrimonial agency.

"Can you gimme a bite, ma'am?" said the ragged hobo. "I'm hungry enuff ter eat a hoss." "I regret to say," replied the kind lady, "that we are just out of horses, but I'll call the dog."

Mabel—Yes, dear, I will be a helpmeet to you and try to lighten the daily troubles and worries of your life as best I can. Arthur—But I have none, darling. Mabel—Oh, you old goose! I mean when we are married, of course!

"Uncle John," queried the pretty girl who was seeking information, "would I be justified in writing to a young man who has never written to me?" "Only on very important business, my dear," answered the old man. "Well, this is important business," she explained. "I want him to marry me."

Burglar Bill—Got any children? Slippery Sam (moodily)—I had a son oncet. I trained him up to snatch pocketbooks from ladies out shopping. Burglar Bill—Wot became of 'im? Slippery Sam—He starved ter death.

# THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

## DYE FAMINE TO BE SMASHED.

The present dye famine will be smashed within the next sixty days, according to L. H. Fisher, of the United Import and Export Company of New York City, who was in Philadelphia recently. Mr. Fisher said that there is now being rushed across the Continent a large quantity of orchilla, from which the dye manufacturers are able to make a dye extract equal, if not superior in luster and tone, to any other that has heretofore been used.

It was rumored that speculators are endeavoring to obtain an option on the entire shipment which is valued at \$250,000. Mr. Fisher intimated that the policy of his company was to supply the requirements of the manufacturers direct, and further than this he would not discuss the subject.

## PAPER UNDERCLOTHES.

Underclothes of paper are now used by airmen, as they have long been used by men who are "down and out" and as paper has long been used by thrifty country housewives for making bed quilts. For paper is one of the warmest substances known. This means that it keeps the cold out and the heat in, for of course it has no warmth in itself, any more than a blanket has. It is a perfect non-conductor of heat.

Suits are made of thin paper. They consist of a coat, trousers, socks and a cap with earlaps, which, the inventor says, can be "washed and dried." An aviator is more likely to make such a suit for himself, wrapping sheets and strips of paper about his body and fastening them with paste. Then when he wants to remove them he can tear them off, making a new suit whenever he is going to take flight.

A piece of paper placed over the upper part of the chest when out motoring is a splendid protection against cold winds. Newspapers placed between sheets of cotton, silk or wool and sewn all over make warm quilts, warmer than many of the so-called "comfortables" that are filled with cotton.

## EXPLORING PARTY FINDS CAMP FOR OUTLAWS.

The party headed by Doane Robinson, of the State Historical Society, Pierre, S. Dak., which went down the river to locate the site of Loisel House, continued their investigation, and on Simoneau Island, opposite old Fort George, they located the site of a dugout which was occupied by a band of outlaws in 1846, which ruled things with a high hand for a time in this section.

The site is in an alfalfa field at present, but the old walls and foundation of the fireplace and chimney yet are easily located. This band was part of a company sent up the Missouri River by Fox, Livingston & Co., of New York, who entered into opposition with the American Fur Company for trade, and sent up a large supply of whisky for trading purposes.

The post this party established at Fort George was in

charge of a man named Kelsey, and with his whisky business he was getting a lot of the trade which had been coming to the American company at Fort Pierre, and the manager of that post sent a man to Fort George with a stock of goods to trade. Kelsey and his men destroyed his camp and stole his goods. They captured the William P. May, a fur-laden steamer coming down the river, and confiscated the cargo.

About this time a part of the tough crew in charge of Kelsey captured what remained of his whisky stock and went to Simoneau Island and set up business for themselves. Kelsey claimed the profits of their trading, but as they declined to acknowledge that he had any rights, he finally went to their camp, where, in a quarrel, he killed two of them and wounded several others and fled the country.

The party also located and took measurements of a large fortification near the mouth of Chapelle Creek and located the site of Loisel House on the island at the mouth of Chapelle Creek.

## STONE CANNON-BALLS.

Two stone cannon-balls, relics of a Turkish war of three and a half centuries ago, have just been presented to the museum of Hobart College, at Geneva, N. Y., says the Popular Science Monthly. Ten inches in diameter, they weigh 20 pounds each. Such balls as these were used as recently as 1807 in defending Constantinople from attack—and by Great Britain.

It was in 1571 that these stone balls were used. Turkey was at war with the Kingdom of Cyprus, one of the many Christian States that grew out of the Crusades. Against the city of Famagusta, an important stronghold of the enemy, the Turks trained their cannon, some of the first used in European warfare.

These guns were mostly of wrought iron, made in two pieces and screwed together. The barrel, in which the stone shot was rammed, had a 25-inch bore. The rear piece, or powder chamber, was 10 inches in diameter. The gun weighed 19 tons and was called "bombard" because used almost entirely in siege operations.

The cannon threw stone balls—which varied in weight from 6 pounds to 6 or 7 hundredweight. The average weight was 300 pounds. Some of these, weighing 20 pounds, though mere grapeshot in that day, are still several times as heavy as the shell of the standard American field gun, the 17 pounder.

Crude as these stone cannon-balls seem now, the Turks made themselves feared in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by the destructiveness of their artillery, which had then a reputation like that of the German siege mortars or the French 75 millimeter guns.

Turkish cannoneers made a great demonstration of artillery work in 1453, at the siege of Constantinople. They fired stone shot from larger pieces than had been seen in Europe. No wonder that Constantinople fell.

## TAKE NOTICE!

Itch Powder, Bombs and Cachoo cannot be sent by mail. Only orders for these goods amounting to one dollar will be accepted, as delivery will have to be made by express.



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The coin holder is attached to a ring made so as to fit anyone's finger. The holder clasps tightly a 25c. piece. When the ring is placed on the finger with the coin showing on the palm of the hand and offered in change it cannot be picked up. A nice way to tip people.

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### THE FRIGHTFUL RATTLESNAKE!

To all appearance it is a harmless piece of colored paper with a mouth-piece attachment, but upon placing it to one's mouth, and blowing into the tube, an imitation snake over two feet in length springs out of the roll like a flash of lightning, producing a whistling, fluttering sound that would frighten a wild Indian. We guarantee our rattlesnake not to bite, but would not advise you to play the joke on timid women or delicate children. Each snake packed in a box. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed postpaid.

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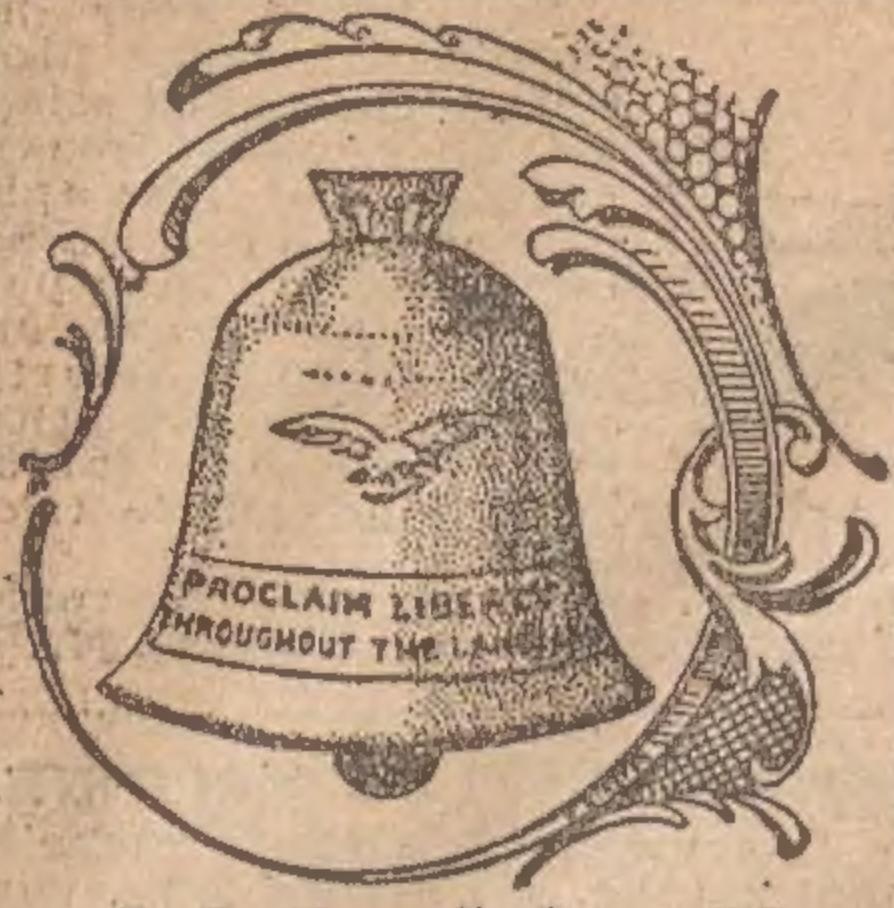
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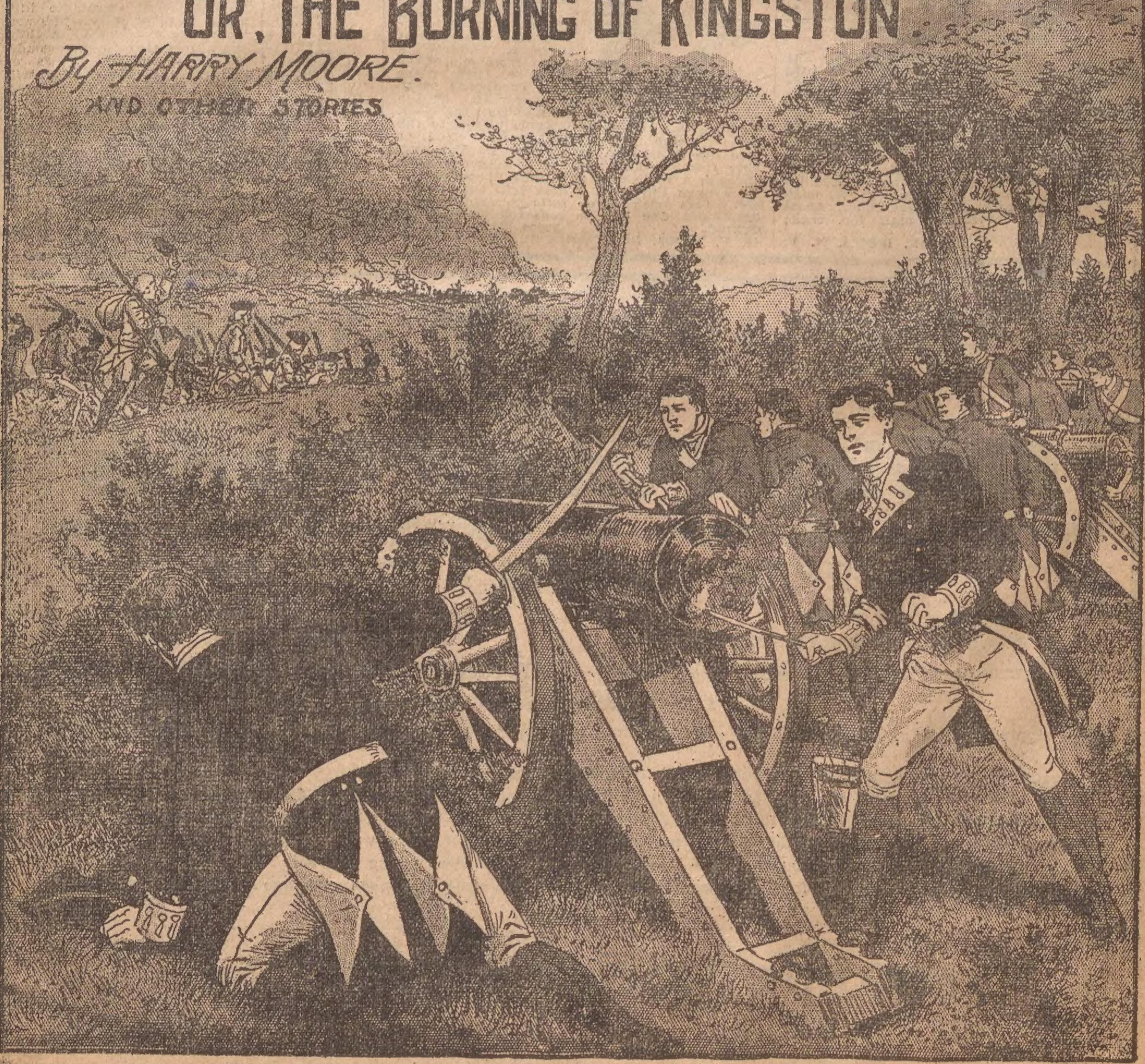
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